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WITHDRAWN

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VOLUME XIX

Portland, Maine
THOMAS B. MOSHER
Mdccccxiij

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The Bibelot

IN *her preface to* Ariadne in Mantua, *Vernon Lee confesses,* "*It is in order to give others the pleasure of reading and re-reading a small masterpiece that I mention the likelihood of the catastrophe of my* Ariadne *having been suggested by the late Mr. Shorthouse's* Little Schoolmaster Mark." *Now this brief romance has an interesting history showing how few writers have the courage of dismissing second thoughts, when a supposed moral is involved.*

The text of the first part of The Little Schoolmaster Mark *first appeared in* The English Illustrated Magazine *for October, 1883, and reappeared in book form in the same month. It was reissued in December, and then, to the consternation of all artistic souls, a second part came out in the same magazine in October, 1884. This was twice reprinted in February, 1885, and later on during the same year a complete edition of the two parts combined in a single volume was put forth, and again reprinted in 1891 and 1894. It is very evident that Vernon Lee's* Academy *review of the first part of* Little Mark *in December, 1883, did not*

strike Mr. Shorthouse favorably. He writes to his friend, Mr. Edmund Gosse: "It is very entertaining and has much truth in it but it is surface truth . . . in one respect she is quite wrong; I did not go out of my way to mention her book in the preface. It was simple honesty to do so. If I could only write a second part she would soon give up her praises of Little Mark and loathe it as much as she does John Inglesant."

But all things considered Vernon Lee was critically secure. The story came to its legitimate and exquisite end as she read it before Shorthouse had changed a thing of beauty into the dreary affair his lack of artistic instinct betrayed him into attempting. One would have thought that Canon Ainger's letter, which we have cited, made clear the fact that details beyond the death of the child were in the nature of anti-climax, if not actual bathos, but the more literary Canon did not fully reckon on the desire to pry out the indefinite happenings after Little Mark had come to the end of life, even though at the hazard of spoiling the beautiful story as first conceived and executed before the notion arose—"May not something be said for the prince's view of life? May not religion be conceived as a fine art?" Immediately we discover Mr.

Shorthouse at his expository worst and one can discern the second part looming up in all its foggy ineffectiveness. We should, however, be doing the author of John Inglesant *a decided wrong if we did not make clear that he too had once seen what was so evident to his friendly correspondent. In a letter to Ainger (December 3, 1883) he says, "I am very glad I stopped when I did. I heard a voice beyond me saying, 'you have written enough; stop there.'" Notwithstanding, on December 9, writing Gosse he admits: "I am rather tempted to try a second part." Possibly it was due in a measure to the anonymous evangelical lady he mentions to Lady Welby; "I am beginning to feel my way toward a second part, if by any help or insight I can get from others I shall be able to do it — at present I am only groping." When Canon Ainger perused the latter portion of* Little Mark *he wrote that he "felt it to be successful." Shorthouse also felt that the first part was "terribly handicapped by having first appeared in* The English Illustrated." *Later on he sent the completed book to John Addington Symonds who, as he is careful to inform us, "had been greatly interested in the first part." Did Symonds ever make reply? It would seem not, and that Shorthouse at last began*

to believe "I do not think that Little Mark *is sufficiently appreciated."*

From this time on Vernon Lee became persona non grata, *and when the novel* Sir Percival *appeared, we are told by its author that it "is written against a certain very definite school of thought in London, and especially against Vernon Lee." The first part of* Little Mark *as we give it is perdurably perfect. As an allegory it is* not *to be classed, as Shorthouse clearly stated. He also tells us, "Art is impossible in a novel with a purpose, as all my books are."*

Vernon Lee, however, survived our author's pique and, best of all, has since written two short stories, Madame Krasinska *and* Sister Benvenuta and the Christ Child, *which will plead for whatever any school of thought may be capable of producing. Should our preference be questioned try to imagine* Ariadne in Mantua *in a second installment with all the welter of witlessness such a literary* debacle *would imply. Violet Paget knew the meaning of self restraint and could practice it, and so did Joseph Henry Shorthouse before his* Little Schoolmaster Mark *had opened the way to a something outside of art and alien to the beauty of form.*

THE LITTLE SCHOOLMASTER MARK: A SPIRITUAL ROMANCE, (I-IV).

By

J. H. SHORTHOUSE.

PREFACE.

The readers of German autobiography (and more delightful reading cannot be had) will perceive that I have made use of some passages in the childhood of Heinrich Jung-Stilling to create the character of Little Mark. The experience of the Princess as to private religious societies was also that of Stilling. Should this little tale induce any one, at present ignorant of Stilling's Autobiography, to read that book, they will forget any grudge they may have formed against the present writer. As a matter of common honesty I should wish to express the pleasure I have had in reading another delightful book, Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy, *by Vernon Lee.*

J. H. S.

When the little schoolmaster Mark is forced to take up his abode in the clever and polished and wicked world, the world *likes* him for his purity and unworldliness; for the world cannot choose but admire and revere. It sees what benefit religion brings, but it will not surrender itself to it—it will not gaze and gaze and adore, till it assimilates itself to the Divine Ideal. It must needs have Religion for its plaything and its playfellow—a new instrument for its inventiveness and resource. Religion must take its share in the world's Saturnalia. But in the midst of it, the young child droops and falls, and there is a cry of *Look! Look! the child is dying*. And at once the play was stopped. And so the story ends. Most true vision of the end of all such endeavours! Religion must be above *us*, and greater than *us*, if it is to lift us higher. If we put it on our own level, or patronize it, or play with it, it will die. And when it dies, corruption spreads. Society may linger yet for a while in the afterglow of its memory, but the end will not be far off.

CANON AINGER.

THE LITTLE SCHOOLMASTER MARK.

A SPIRITUAL ROMANCE.

I.

THE Court Chaplain Eisenhart walked up the village street towards the schoolhouse. It was April, in the year 1750, and a soft west wind was blowing up the street, across the oak woods of the near forest. Between the forest and the village lay a valley of meadows, planted with thorn bushes and old birch trees with snow-white stems: the fresh green leaves trembled continually in the restless wind. On the other side of the street a lofty crag rose precipitously above a rushing mountain torrent. This rock is the spur of other lofty hills, planted with oak and beech trees, through the openings of which a boy may frequently be seen, driving an ox or gathering firewood on his half-trodden path. Here and there in the distance the smoke of charcoal-burners ascends into the sky. Between the street and the torrent stand the houses of the village, with high thatched roofs and walls of timber and of mud, and, at the back, projecting stages and steps above the rushing

water. A paradise in the late spring, in summer, and in autumn, these wild and romantic woods, traversed only by a few forest paths, are terrible in winter, and the contrast is part of their charm. The schoolhouse stands in the upper part of the village, on the opposite side of the street to the rest of the houses, looking across the valley to the western sun. Two large birch trees are before the open door. The Court Chaplain pauses before he goes in.

How it comes to pass that a Court Chaplain should be walking up the street of this forest village we shall see anon.

At first sight there does not seem to be much schoolwork going on. A boy, or we should rather say a child, of fifteen is seated at an open window looking over the forest. He is fair-haired and blue-eyed; but it is the deep blue of an angel's, not the cold gray blue of a courtier's eyes. Around him are seated several children, both boys and girls; and, far from teaching, he appears to be relating stories to them. The story, whatever it is, ceases as the Court Chaplain goes in, and both raconteur and audience rise.

"I have something to say to thee, schoolmaster," said the Chaplain, "send the children away. Thou wilt not teach them anything more to-day, I suspect."

The children went away lingeringly, not at all like children just let loose from school.

When they were gone the expression of the Chaplain's face changed — he looked at the little schoolmaster very kindly, and sat down on one of the benches, which were black and worn with age.

"Last year, little one," he said, "when the Herr Rector took thee away from the Latin school and from thy father's tailoring, and confirmed thee, and thou tookest thy first communion, and he made thee schoolmaster here, many wise people shook their heads. I do not think," he continued, with a smile, "that they have ceased shaking them when they have seen in how strange a manner thou keepest school."

"Ah, your Reverence," said the boy, eagerly, "the good people are satisfied enough when they see that their children learn without receiving much correction; and many of them even take pleasure in the beautiful tales which I relate to the

children, and which they repeat to them. Every morning, as soon as the children enter the school, I pray with them, and catechise them in the principles of our holy religion, as God teaches me, for I use no book. Then I set the children to read and to write, and promise them these charming tales if they learn well. It is impossible to express with what zeal the children learn. When they are perverse or not diligent I do not relate my histories, but I read to myself."

"Well, little one," said the Court Chaplain, "it is a strange system of education, but I am far from saying that it is a bad one. Nevertheless it will not last. The Herr Rector has his eye upon thee, and will send thee back to thy tailoring very soon."

The tears came into the little schoolmaster's eyes, and he turned very pale.

"Well, do not be sad," said the Chaplain. "I have been thinking and working for thee. Thou hast heard of the Prince, though thou hast, I think, never seen the pleasure palace, Joyeuse, though it is so near."

"I have seen the iron gates with the golden scrolls," said the boy. "They are

like the heavenly Jerusalem; every several gate is one pearl."

The Chaplain did not notice the confused metaphor of this description.

"Well," he said, "I have been speaking to the Prince of thee. Thou knowest nothing of these things, but the Prince has lived for many years in Italy, a country where they do nothing but sing and dance. He has come back, as thou knowest, and has married a wife, according to the traditions of his race. Since he came back to Germany he has taken a fancy to this forest-lodge, for at first it was little more, and has garnished it and enlarged it according to his southern fancies; that is why he likes it better than his princely cities. He has two children — a boy and a girl — eight and nine, or thereabouts. The Princess is not a good woman. She neglects her children, and she prefers the princely cities to her husband, to her little ones, and to the beautiful forests and hills."

The little schoolmaster listened with open eyes. Then he said, beneath his breath:

"How Satanic that must be!"

"The Prince," continued the Court Chaplain, "is a beautiful soul 'manqué,' which

means spoilt. His sister, the Princess Isoline von Isenberg-Wertheim, *is* such a soul. She has joined herself to a company of pious people who have taken an old manor-house belonging to the Prince on the farther side of the palace gardens, where they devote themselves to prayer, to good works, and to the manufacture of half-silk stuffs, by which they maintain themselves and give to the poor. The Prince himself knows something of such feelings. He indeed knows the way of piety, though he does not follow it. He acknowledges the grace of refinement which piety gives, even to the most highly bred. He is particularly desirous that his children should possess this supreme touch. Something that I told him of thee pleased his fancy. Thy strange way of keeping school seemed to him very new; more especially was he delighted with that infancy story of thee and old Father Stalher. The old man, I told the Prince, came into thy father's for his new coat and found thee reading. Reading, in any one, seemed to Father Stalher little short of miraculous; but in a child of eight it was more — it was elfish.

"'What are you doing there, child?' said Father Stalher.

"'I am reading.'

"'Canst thou read already?'

"'That is a foolish question, for I am a human being,' said the child, and began to read with ease, proper emphasis, and due distinction.

"Stalher was amazed, and said:

"'The devil fetch me, I have never seen the like in all my life.'

"Then little Mark jumped up and looked timidly and carefully round the room. When he saw that the devil did not come, he went down on his knees in the middle of the floor and said:

"'O God! how gracious art Thou.'

"Then, standing up boldly before old Stalher, he said:

"'Man, hast thou ever seen Satan?'

"'No.'

"'Then call upon him no more.'

"And the child went quietly into another room.

"And I told the Prince what thy old grandfather used to say to me.

"'The lad is soaring away from us; we

must pray that God will guide him by His good Spirit.'

"When I told all this to the Prince, he said:

"'I will have this boy. He shall teach my children as he does the village ones. None can teach children as can such a child as this.'"

The little schoolmaster had been looking before him all the time the Chaplain had been speaking, as though in something of a maze. He evidently saw nothing to wonder at in the story of himself and old Stalher. It seemed to him commonplace and obvious enough.

"I shall send up a tailor from Joyeuse to-morrow," said the Chaplain; "a court tailor, such as thou never saw'st, nor thy father either. He must measure thee for a court-suit of black. Then we will go together, and I will present thee to the Prince."

II.

A few days after this conversation there was a melancholy procession down the village street. The Court Chaplain and

the schoolmaster walked first; the boy was crying bitterly. Then followed all the children of the school, all weeping, and many peasant women, and two or three old men. The Rector stood in a corner of the churchyard under a great walnut tree and looked on. He did not weep. The Court Chaplain looked ashamed, for all the people took this misfortune to be of his causing.

When they had gone some way out of the village the children stopped, and, collecting into a little crowd, they wept more than ever. The Chaplain turned round and waved his hand, but the little schoolmaster was too troubled to take any farewell. He covered his face with his hands and went on, weeping bitterly. At last they passed away out of sight.

When they had gone on some distance, the boy became calmer; he took his hands from his face, and looked up at the Chaplain through his tears.

"What am I to do when I come to the Prince, your Reverence?" he said.

"Thou must make a bow as best thou canst," said the other; "thou must not speak till the Prince speaks to thee, and

thou must say 'Highness' sometimes, but not too often.

"How am I to tell when to say 'Highness' and when to forbear?" said the boy.

"Ah! that I cannot tell thee. Thou must trust in God; He will show thee when to say 'Highness' and when not."

They went forward in this way across the meadows, and through the scattered forest for two leagues or more, in the mid-day heat. The boy was not used to labour, and he grew very tired and unhappy. It seemed to him that he was leaving behind all that was fair and true and beautiful, and going to that which was false and garish and unkind. At last they came to an open drive, or avenue of the forest, where great oaks were growing. Some distance up the avenue they saw a high park pale stretching away on either hand, and in the centre of the drive were iron gates covered with gilt scrolls and letters. The Court Chaplain pushed the gates open, and they went in.

Inside, the forest drive was planted with young trees in triple rows. After walking for some distance they reached another gate, similar to the first, but provided with

"loges," or guardrooms, on either side. One or two soldiers were standing listlessly about, but they took no heed. Here the drive entered the palace gardens, laid out in grass plots and stone terraces, and crossed by lofty hedges which shut out the view. They approached the long façade of a house with pointed roofs and green shutter blinds to all the windows. Here the Chaplain left the path, and conducted his companion to a remote side entrance; and, after passing through many passages and small rooms, at last left him to the tender mercies of the court tailor and some domestics, at whose hands the little schoolmaster suffered what appeared to him to be unspeakable indignities. He was washed from head to foot, his hair was cut, curled, and frizzled, and he was finally arrayed in a plain suit of black silk, with silk stockings, and delicate shoes with silver buckles, and plain linen bands like a clergyman. The worn homespun suit that had become dear to him was ruthlessly thrown upon a dust-heap, and a message was sent to Herr Chaplain that his *protégé* was now fit to be presented to the Prince.

The boy could scarcely restrain his tears;

he felt as though he were wandering through the paths of a miserable dream. Ah! could he only awake and find himself again in the old schoolhouse, narrating the adventures of the Fair Melusina to the attentive little ones.

The Chaplain led him up some back stairs, and through corridors and anterooms, all full of wonderful things, which the boy passed bewildered, till they reached a small room where were two boys apparently of his own age. They appeared to have been just engaged in punching each other's heads, for their hair was disordered, their faces red, and one was in tears. They regarded the Chaplain with a sullen suspicion, and the schoolmaster with undisguised contempt. The door at the farther side of the room was partly open, the Chaplain scratched upon it, and, receiving some answer, they went in.

The little schoolmaster dared scarcely breathe when he got into the room, so surprising was all he saw. To the left of the door, as they came in, was placed a harpsichord, before which was standing, with her back towards them, a young girl whose

face they could not see; by her side, at the harpsichord, was seated an elderly man upon whom the boy gazed with wonder, so different was he from anything that he had ever seen before; opposite to them, in the window, hung a canary in a cage, and the boy perceived, even in the surprise of the moment, that the bird was agitated and troubled. But the next moment all his attention was absorbed by the figure of the Prince, who was seated on a couch to the right of the room, and almost facing them. To say that this was the most wonderful sight that the little schoolmaster had ever seen would be to speak foolishly, for he had seen no wonderful sights, but it surpassed the wildest imagination of his dreams. The Prince was a very handsome man of about thirty-five, of a slight and delicate figure, and of foreign manners and pose. He was dressed in a suit of what seemed to the boy a wonderful white cloth, of a soft material, embroidered in silk, with flowers of the most lovely tints. The coat was sparingly ornamented in this manner, but the waistcoat, which was only partly seen, was a mass of these exquisite flowers. At his throat

and wrists were masses of costly lace, and his hair was frizzled, and slightly powdered, which increased the delicate expression of his features, which were perfectly cut. He lay back on the couch, caressing, with his right hand, a small monkey, also gorgeously dressed, and armed with a toy sword, who sat on the arm of the sofa cracking nuts, and throwing the shells upon the carpet.

The Prince looked up as the two came in, and waved his disengaged hand for them to stand back, and the next moment the strange phantasmagoria, into which the boy's life was turned, took another phase, and he again lost all perception of what he had seen before; for there burst into the little room the most wonderful voice, which not only he and the Chaplain, but even the Maestro and the Prince, had well-nigh ever heard.

The girl, who was taking her music lesson, had been discovered in Italy by the old Maestro, who managed the music of the private theatre which the Prince had formed. He had heard her, a poor untaught girl, in a coffee-house in Venice, and she afterwards became, in the opinion of some,

the most pathetic female actress and singer of the century.

The first chord of her voice penetrated into the boy's nature as nothing had ever done before; he had never heard any singing save that of the peasants at church, and of the boys and girls who sang hymns round the cottage hearths in the winter nights.

The solemn tramp of the Lutheran measures, where the deep basses of the men drown the women's soft voices, and the shrill unshaded singing of the children, could hardly belong to this art, which he heard now for the first time. These sudden runs and trills, so fantastic and difficult, these chords and harmonies, so quaint and full of colour, were messages from a world of sound, as yet an unknown country to the boy. He stood gazing upon the singer with open mouth. The Prince moved his jewelled hand slightly in unison with the notes; the monkey, apparently rather scared, left off cracking his nuts, and, creeping close to his master, nestled against his beautiful coat close to the star upon his breast.

Then suddenly, in this world of wonders, a still more wonderful thing occurred. There

entered into this bewitching, this entrancing voice, a strange, almost a discordant, note. Through the fantasied gaiety of the theme, to which the sustained whirr of the harpsichord was like the sigh of the wind through the long grass, there was perceptible a strain, a tremor of sadness, almost of sobs. It was as if, in the midst of festival, some hidden grief, known beforetime of all, but forgotten or suppressed, should at once and in a moment well up in the hearts of all, turning the dance-measures into funeral chants, the love-songs into the loveliest of chorales. The Maestro faltered in his accompaniment; the Prince left off marking the time, he swept the monkey from him with a movement of his hand, and leaned forward eagerly in his seat: the discarded favourite slunk into a corner where it leaned disconsolately against the wall. The pathetic strain went on, growing more tremulous and more intense, when suddenly the singing stopped, the girl buried her face in her hands and sank upon the floor in a passion of tears; the boy sprang forward, he forgot where he was, he forgot the Prince —

"It is the bird," he cried, "the bird!"

The canary, whose dying struggles the singer had been watching through her song, gave a final shudder and fell lifeless from its perch.

The Prince rose: he lifted the singer from her knees, and, taking her hands from the wet face, he turned to the others with a smile.

"Ah, Herr Chaplain," he said, "you come in a good hour. This then is the angel-child. They will console each other."

And, picking up the monkey as he passed, he left the room by another door.

III.

When the Prince was gone the Maestro gathered up some music and turned to his pupil, who was drying her eyes and looking somewhat curiously at the boy through her tears.

"Well, Signorina," he said, "you truly sang that very well. If you could bring some of that 'timbre' into your voice always, you would indeed be a singer. But you are too light, too 'frivole.' I wish we could have a canary always who would die;"

and, bowing very slightly to the Chaplain, he left the room.

Then the Chaplain looked kindly at the young people.

"Fräulein," he said, "this is the young tutor to the little serene Highnesses, I will leave you together, as the Prince wished."

When they were alone the boy felt very uncomfortable. He was very shy. This perhaps was as well, for there was no shyness at all on the part of his companion.

"So," she said, looking at him with a smile, and eyes that were again bright, "you are the new toy. I have heard of you. You are a wonderful holy child; what they call 'pious' in this country. How very funny! come and give me a kiss."

"No, Fräulein," said Mark, blushing still more, "that would be improper in me."

"Would it?" said the girl lightly; "don't angels kiss? How very stupid it must be to be an angel! Come and look at poor 'Fifine' then! I suppose she is quite dead."

And, opening the cage, she took out the piteous heap of yellow feathers and held it in her delicate hand, while the tears came again into her large dark eyes.

"Ah! it was dreadful," she said, "to sing and see him die."

"But, Fräulein," said the boy, "you sang most beautifully. I never heard anything so wonderful. It was heaven itself."

The girl looked at him very kindly.

"Oh, you like my singing," she said, "I am glad of that. Do you know, we shall be great friends. I like you. You are a very pretty boy."

And she tried to put her arm round his neck. Mark eluded her embrace. "Fräulein," he said, with a dignified air, which made his companion laugh, "you must remember that I am tutor to their serene Highnesses; I shall be very glad to be friends with you, and you will tell me something about the people in the palace."

"Oh!" replied the girl, "there is no one but our own company, but they are the greatest fun, and better fun here than anywhere else. It is delightful to see them among these stupid, solemn, heavy Germans, with their terrible language. I shall love to see you with them, you will stare your pretty eyes out. There 's old Carricchio — that 's

not his name, you know, but he is called so because of his part — that is the best of them, they are always the same — off the stage or on it — always laughing, always joking, always kicking up their heels. You will see the faces — such delicious grimaces, old Carricchio will make at you when he asks you for the salt. But don't be frightened, I 'll take care of you. They are all in love with me, but I like you already better than all of them. You shall come on yourself sometime, just as you are; you will make a delightful part."

Mark stared at her with amazement.

"But what are these people?" he said; "what do they do?"

"Oh, you will see," she said, laughing; "how can I tell you. You never dreamt of such things; you will stare your eyes out. Well, there 's the Prince, and the little Highnesses, and the old *Barotin*, the governess, and" — here a change came over the girl's face — "and the Princess is coming soon, I hear, with her '*servente*.'"

"The Princess!" said the boy, "does she ever come?"

"Yes, she comes, sometimes," said his

companion. "I wish she didn't. She is a bad woman. I hate her."

"Why? and what is her '*servente?*'"

"I hate her," said the girl; "her *servente* is the Count — *Cavalière-servente*, you know" — and her face became quite hard and fierce — "he is the devil himself."

The little schoolmaster's face became quite pale.

"The devil!" he said, staring with his large blue eyes.

"Oh! you foolish boy!" she said, laughing again, "I don't mean that devil. The Count is a much more real devil than he!"

The boy looked so dreadfully shocked that she grew quite cheerful again.

"What a strange boy you are!" she said, laughing. "Do you think he will come and take you away? I'll take care of you — come and sit on my lap;" and, sitting down, she spread out her lap for him with an inviting gesture.

Mark rejected this attractive offer with disdain, and looked so unspeakably miserable and ready to cry that his companion took pity upon him.

"Poor boy," she said, "you shan't be

teased any more. Come with me, I will take you to the *Barotin*, and present you to the little serene Highnesses. They are nice children — for Highnesses; you will get on well with them."

Taking the boy's unwilling hand, she led him through several rooms, lined with old marquetterie cabinets in the Italian fashion, till she found a page, to whom she delivered Mark, telling him to take him to the Baroness, into whose presence she herself did not appear anxious to intrude, that he might be presented to his future pupils.

The page promised to obey, and, giving him a box on the ear to ensure attention, a familiarity which he took with the most cheerful and forgiving air, she left the room.

The moment she was gone the page made a rush at Mark, and, seizing him round the waist, lifted him from the ground and ran with him through two or three rooms, till he reached a door, where he deposited him upon his feet. Then throwing open the door, he announced suddenly, "The Herr Tutor to the serene Highnesses!" and shut Mark into the room.

His breath taken away by this atrocious

attack upon his person and dignity, Mark saw before him a stately, but not unkindly-looking lady and two beautiful children, a boy and girl, of about eight and nine years of age. The lady rose, and, looking at Mark with some curiosity, as well she might, said:

"Your serene Highnesses, this is the tutor whom the Prince, your father, has provided for you. You will no doubt profit greatly by his instructions."

The little girl came forward at once, and gave Mark her hand, which, not knowing what to do with, he held for a moment and then dropped.

"My papa has spoken of you," she said. "He has told me that you are very good."

"I shall try to be good, Princess," said Mark, who by this time had recovered his breath.

The little girl seemed very much insulted. She drew herself up and flushed all over her face.

"You must not say *Princess* to me," she said, "that is what only the little Princes say. You must say, 'my most gracious and serene Highness,' whenever you speak to me."

This was too much. Mark blushed with anger.

"May God forgive me," he said, "if I do anything so foolish. I am here to teach thee and thy brother, and I will do it in my own way, or not at all."

The little Princess looked as if she were about to cry, then, apparently thinking better of it, she said, with a half sob, and dropping the stately "*you:*"

"Well, my papa says that thou art an angel. I suppose thou must do as thou wilt."

The little boy, meanwhile, had been staring at Mark with solemn eyes. He said nothing, but he came, finally, to the little schoolmaster and put his hand in his.

What more might have been said cannot be told, for at this moment the page appeared again, saying that dinner was served at the third table, and that the Herr Tutor was to dine there.

The Baroness seemed surprised at this.

"I should have supposed," she said, "that he would have dined with the Chaplain at the second table."

"No," asserted the page boldly, "the Prince has ordered it."

When alone, the Prince seldom dined ostensibly in public; but often appeared masqued at the third table, which was that of the actors and singers. He had given no orders at all about Mark. The arrangement was entirely of the Signorina's making, who desired that he should dine with her. It was a bold stroke; and an hour afterwards, when the Court Chaplain discovered it, measures were taken to prevent its recurrence — at least for a time.

In whatever way this arrangement came to be made, however, the result was very advantageous to Mark. In the first place, it was not formidable. The company took little notice of him. Signor Carricchio made grotesque faces at others, but not at him. He sat quite safe and snug by the Signorina, and certainly stared with all his eyes, as she had said. The long, dark, aquiline features of the men, the mobile play of humorous farce upon their faces, the constant chatter and sport — what could the German peasant boy do but stare? His friend taught him how to hold his knife and fork, and how to eat. The Italians were very nice in their eating, and the boy

picked up more in five minutes from the Signorina — he was very quick — than he would have done in weeks from the Chaplain.

He was so scared and frightened, and the girl was so kind to him, that his boy's heart went out to her.

"What shall I call you, Signorina?" he said, as dinner was over. "You are so good to me." He had already caught the Italian word.

"My name is Faustina Banti," she said, looking at him with her great eyes; "but you may call me 'Tina,' if you like. I had a little brother once who called me that. He died."

"You are so very kind to me, Tina," said the boy, "I am sure you must be very good."

She looked at him again, smiling.

IV.

The next morning early Mark was sent for to the Prince. He was shown into the dressing-room, but the Prince was already dressed. He was seated in an easy-chair

reading a small closely-printed sheet of paper, upon which the word "Wien" was conspicuous to the boy. The Prince bade the little schoolmaster be seated on a fauteuil near him, and looked so kindly that he felt quite at his ease.

"Well! little one," said the Prince, "how findest thou thyself? Hast thou found any friends yet in this place?"

"The Signorina has been very kind to me, Highness," said the boy.

"Ah!" said the Prince, smiling, "thou hast found that out already. That is not so bad. I thought you two would be friends. What has the Signorina told thee?"

"She has told me of the actors who are so clever and so strange. She says that they are all in love with her."

"That is not unlikely. And what else?"

"She has told me of the Princess and of her servente."

"Indeed!" said the Prince, with the slightest possible appearance of increased interest; "what does she say of the Princess?"

"She says that she is a bad woman, and that she hates her."

"Ah! the Signorina appears to have formed opinions of her own, and to be able to express them. What else?"

"She says that the servente is the devil himself! But she does not mean the real devil. She says that the servente is a much more real devil than he! Is not that horrible, Highness?"

The Prince looked at Mark for two or three moments, with a kindly but strange far-reaching look, which struck the boy, though he did not in the least understand it.

"I did well, little one," he said at last, "when I sent for thee."

There was a pause. The Prince seemed to have forgotten the presence of the boy, who already was sufficiently of a courtier to hold his tongue.

At last the Prince spoke.

"And the children," he said; "thou hast seen them?"

"Yes," said Mark, with a little shy smile, "I did badly there. I insulted the gracious Fräulein by calling her 'Princess,' which she said only the little Princes should do; and I told her I was come to teach her and

her little brother, and that I should do it in my own way or not at all."

The Prince looked as though he feared that this unexpected amusement would be almost too delightful.

"Well, little one," he said, "thou hast begun well. Better than this none could have done. Only be careful that thou art not spoilt. Care nothing for what thou hearest here. Continue to hate and fear the devil; for, whether he be thy own devil or the servente, he is more powerful than thou. Say nothing but what He whom thou rightly callest God teaches thee to say. So all will be well. Better teacher than thou my daughter could not have. I would wish her to be pious, within reason; not like her aunt, that would not be well. I should wish her to care for the poor. Nothing is so gracious in noble ladies as to care for the poor. When they cease to do this they lose tone at once. The French noblesse have done so. I should like her to visit the poor herself. It will have the best effect upon her nature; much better," continued the Prince with a half smile, and seemingly speaking to himself, "much better, I should imagine,

than on the poor themselves. But what will you have? — some one must suffer, and the final touch cannot be obtained without."

There was another pause. This aspect of the necessary suffering the poor had to undergo was so new to Mark that he required some time to grasp it. The visits of noble ladies to his village had not been so frequent as to cause the malign effects to be deeply felt.

. . . . . .

Acting upon this advice so far as he understood it, Mark pursued the same system of education with the little Highnesses as he had followed with the village children; that is, he set them to read such things as he was told they ought to learn, and encouraged them to do so by promising to relate his histories and tales if they were good.

It is surprising how much the same human nature remains after generations of different breeding and culture. It is true that these princely children had heard many tales before, perhaps the very ones the little schoolmaster now related, yet they delighted in nothing so much as hearing them again. Much of this pleasure, no doubt, was due to

the intense faith and interest in them shown by Mark himself. He talked to them also much about God and the unseen world of angels, and of the wicked one; and, as they believed firmly that he was an angel, they listened to these things with the more ready belief. Indeed, the affection which the little boy formed for his child-tutor was unusual. He was a silent, solemn child; he said nothing, but he attached himself to Mark with a persistent devotion.

Every one in the palace, indeed, took to the boy: the pages left off teasing him; the Signorina petted him in a manner sufficient to deprive her numerous lovers of their reason; the servants waited on him for love and not for reward; but the strangest thing of all was, that in proportion as he was kindly treated — just as much as every one seemed to love him and delight in him — just so much did the boy become miserable and unhappy. The kinder these people were, the more he felt the abyss which lay between his soul and theirs; earnestness and solemn faith in his — sarcasm and lively farce, and, at the most, kindly toleration of belief, in theirs.

Had they ill-treated or wronged him, he would not have felt it so much; but kindness and security on their part, seemed to intensify the sense of doubt and perplexity on his.

It is difficult to realise the effect which sarcasm and irony have upon such natures as his. They look upon life with such a single eye. It is so beautiful and solemn to them. Truth is so true; they are so much in earnest that they cannot understand the complex feeling that finds relief in sarcasm and allegory, that tolerates the frivolous and the vain, as an ironic reading of the lesson of life.

The actors were particularly kind to him, though their grotesque attempts to amuse him mostly added to his misery. They were extremely anxious that he should appear upon the stage, and indeed the boy's beauty and simplicity would have made an excellent foil.

"Herr Tutor," said old Carricchio the arlecchino to him one day, with mock gravity, "we are about to perform a comedy — what is called a masqued comedy, not because we wear masques, for we don't, but

because of our dresses. It consists of music, dancing, love-making, joking, and buffoonery; you will see what a trifle it is all about. The scene is in the garden of a country-house — during what in Italy we call the Villeggiatura, that is the month we spend in the country during the vintage. A lady's fan is found by an ill-natured person in a curious place; all the rest agree not to see the fan, not to acknowledge that it is a fan. It is all left to us at the moment, all except the songs and the music, and you know how delightful those are. If you would take a part, and keep your own character throughout, it would be magnificent; but we will wait, if you once see it you will wish to act."

No one, indeed, was kinder to Mark, or seemed more to delight in his society than the old arlecchino, and the two made a most curious sight, seated together on one of the terraces on a sunny afternoon. Nothing could be more diverse in appearance than this strangely assorted pair. Carricchio was tall, with long limbs, and large aquiline features. He wore a set smile upon his large expressive mouth, which seemed born of no sense of enjoyment, but of an infinite

insight, and of a mocking friendliness. He seldom wore anything but the dress of his part; but he wrapped himself mostly in a long cloak, lined with fur, for even the northern sunshine seemed chilly to the old clown. Wrapped in this ancient garment, he would sit beside Mark, listening to the boy's stories with his deep unfathomed smile; and as he went on with his histories, the boy used to look into his companion's face, wondering at the slow smile, and at the deep wrinkles of the worn visage, till at length, fascinated at the sight, he forgot his stories, and looking into the old man's face appeared to Mark, though the comparison seems preposterous, like gazing at the fated story of the mystic tracings of the star-lit skies.

Why the old man listened so patiently to these childish stories no one could tell; perhaps he did not hear them. He himself said that the presence of Mark had the effect of music upon his jaded and worn sense. But, indeed, there was beneath Carricchio's mechanical buffoonery and farce a sober and pathetic humour, which was almost unconscious, and which was now, probably owing

to advancing years, first becoming known either to himself or others.

"The Maestro has been talking to me this morning," he said one day. "He says that life is a wretched masque, a miserable apology for existence by the side of art; what do you say to that?"

"I do not know what it means," said Mark; "I neither know life nor art, how can I tell?"

"That is true, but you know more than you think. The Maestro means that life is imperfect, struggling, a failure, ugly most often; art is perfect, complete, beautiful, and full of force and power. But I tell him that some failure is better than success; sometimes ugliness is a finer thing than beauty; and that the best art is that which only reproduces life. If life were fashioned after the most perfect art you would never be able to cry, nor to make me cry, as you do over your beautiful tales."

Mark tried to understand this, but failed, and was therefore silent. Indeed it is not certain whether Carricchio himself understood what he was saying.

He seemed to have some suspicion of

this, for he did not go on talking, but was silent for some time. These silences were common between the two.

At last he said:

"I think where the Maestro is wrong is in making the two quarrel. They cannot quarrel. There is no art without life, and no life without art. Look at a puppet-play — the fantoccini — it means life and it means art."

"I never saw a puppet-play," said Mark.

"Well, you have seen us," said Carricchio; "we are much the same. We move ourselves — they are moved by wires; but we do just the same things — we are life and we are art, in the burletta we are both. I often think which is which — which is the imposture and which is the masque. Then I think that somewhere there must be a higher art that surpasses the realism of life — a divine art which is not life but fashions life."

"When I look at you, little one," Carricchio went on, "I feel almost as I do when the violins break in upon the jar and fret of the wittiest dialogue. Jest and lively fancy — these are the sweets of life, no

doubt — and humorous thought and speech and gesture — but they are not this divine art, they are not rest. They shrivel and wither the brain. The whole being is parched, the heart is dry in this sultry, piercing light. But when the stringed melodies steal in, and when the rippling, surging arpeggios and crescendos sweep in upon the sense, and the stilled cadences that lull and soothe — then, indeed, it is like moisture and the gracious dew. It is like sleep; the strained nerves relax; the overwrought frame, which is like dry garden mould, is softened, and the flowers spring up again."

Carricchio paused; but as Mark said nothing, he went on again.

"The other life is gay, lively, bright, full of excitement and interest, of tender pity even, and of love — but this is rest and peace. The other is human life, but what is this? Art? Ah! but a divine art. Here is no struggle, no selfish desire, no striving, no conflict of love or of hate. It is like silence, the most unselfish thing there is. I have, indeed, sometimes thought that music must be the silence of heaven."

"The silence of heaven!" said Mark, with

open eyes. "The silence of heaven! What, then, are its words?"

"Ah! that," said the old clown, smiling, but with a sad slowness in his speech, "is beyond me to tell. I can hear its silence, but not its voice."

FOR FEBRUARY:
THE LITTLE SCHOOLMASTER MARK
(Concluded).

REVIEW.
BY VERNON LEE.

V.

The private theatre in the palace was a room of very moderate size, for the audience was necessarily very small; in fact, the stage was larger than the auditorium. The play took place in the afternoon, and there was no artificial light; many of the operatic performances in Italy, indeed, took place in the open air.

Yet, though the time of day and the natural light deprived the theatre of much of the strangeness and glamour with which it is usually associated, and which so much impress a youth who sees it for the first time, the effect of the first performance upon Mark was very remarkable. He was seated immediately behind the Prince. Far from being delighted with the play, he was overpowered as it went on by an intense melancholy horror. When the violins, the flutes, and the fifes began the overture, a new sense seemed given to him, which was not pleasure but the intensest dread. If the singing of the Signorina had been a shock to him, accustomed as he was only to

the solemn singing of his childhood, what must this elfish, weird, melodious music have seemed, full of gay and careless life, and of artless unconscious airs which yet were miracles of art? He sat, terrified at these delicious sounds, as though this world of music without thought or conscience were a wicked thing. The shrill notes of the fifes, the long tremulous vibration of the strings, seemed to draw his heart after them. Wherever this wizard call might lead him it seemed he would have to follow the alluring chords.

But when the acting began his terror became more intense. The grotesque figures seemed to him those of devils, or at the best of fantastic imps or gnomes. He could understand nothing of the dialogue, but the gestures, the laughter, the wild singing, were shocking to him. When the Signorina appeared, the strange intensity of her colour, the brilliancy of her eyes, and what seemed to him the freedom of her gestures and the boldness of her bewitching glances, far from delighting, as they seemed to do all the others, made him ready to weep with shame and grief. He sank back in his seat to avoid

the notice of the Prince, who, indeed, was too much absorbed in the music and the acting to remember him.

The beauty of the music only added to his despair; had it been less lovely, had the acting not forced now and then a glance of admiring wonder or struck a note of high-toned touching pathos even, it would not all have seemed so much the work of evil. When the comedy was over he crept silently away to his room; and in the excitement of congratulation and praise, as actors and audience mingled together, and the Signorina was receiving the commendations of the Prince, he was not missed.

He could not stay in this place — that at least was clear to him. He must escape. He must return to nature, to the woods and birds, to children and to children's sports. These gibing grimaces, these endless bowings and scrapings and false compliments, known of all to be false, would choke him if he stayed. He must escape from the house of frivolity into the soft, gracious outer air of sincerity and truth.

He cried himself to sleep: all through the night, amid fitful slumber, the crowd

of masques jostled and mocked at him; the weird strains of unknown instruments reached his half-conscious bewildered sense. Early in the morning he awoke. There had been rain in the night, and the smiling morning beckoned him out.

He stole down some back stairs, and found a door which opened on gardens and walks at the back of the palace. This he managed to open, and went out.

The path on which the door opened led him through rows of fruit-trees and young plantations. A little forest of delicate boughs and young leaves lifted itself up against the blue sky, and a myriad drops sparkled in the morning sun. The fresh cool air, the blue sky, the singing of the birds, restored Mark to himself. He seemed to see again the possibility of escape from evil, and the hope of righteousness and peace. His whole spirit went out in prayer and love to the Almighty, who had made these lovely things. He felt as he had been wont to do when, on a fine Sunday, he had walked home with his children in order, relating to them the most beautiful tales of God. He wandered slowly down

the narrow paths. The fresh-turned earth between the rows of saplings, the beds of herbs, the moist grass, gave forth a scent at once delicate and searching. The boy's cheerfulness began to return. The past seemed to fade. He almost thought himself the little schoolmaster again.

After wandering for some time through this delicious land of perfume, of light, and sweet sound, he came to a very long but narrow avenue of old elm trees that led down a gradual slope, as it seemed, into the heart of the forest. Beneath the avenue a well-kept path seemed to point with a guiding hand.

He followed the path for some distance, and had just perceived what seemed to be an old manor-house, standing in a courtyard at the farther end, when he was conscious of a figure advancing along the path to meet him: as it approached he saw that it was that of a lady of tall and commanding appearance, and apparently of great beauty; she wore the dress of some sisterhood. When he was near enough to see her face he found that it was indeed beautiful, with an expression of the purest sincerity and

benevolence. The lady stopped and spoke to Mark at once.

"You must be the new tutor to their Highnesses," she said; "I have heard of you."

Mark said that he was.

"You do not look well," said the lady, very kindly; "are you happy at the palace?"

"Are you the Princess Isoline?" said Mark, not answering the question; "I think you must be, you are so beautiful."

"I am the Princess Isoline," said the lady; "walk a little way with me."

Mark turned with the lady and walked back towards the palace. After a moment or two he said: "I am not happy at Joyeuse, I am very miserable, I want to run away."

"What makes you so unhappy? Are they not kind to you? The Prince is very kind, and the children are good children — I have always thought."

"They are all very kind, too kind to me," said the boy. "I cannot make you understand why I am so miserable, I cannot tell myself — the Prince is worse than all ——"

"Why is the Prince the worst of all?" said the lady, in a very gentle voice.

"All the rest I know are wrong," replied the boy, passionately — "the actors, the Signorina, the pages, and all; but when the Prince looks at me with his quiet smile — when the look comes into his eyes as though he could see through time even into eternity — when he looks at me in his kindly, pitying way — I begin to doubt. Oh, Highness, it is terrible to doubt! Do you think that the Prince is right?"

The Princess was silent for a moment or two; it was not that she did not understand the boy, for she understood him very well.

"No, I think you are right and not the Prince," she said at length, in her quiet voice.

There was a pause: neither seemed to know what to say next. They had now nearly reached the end of the avenue next the palace; the Princess stopped.

"Come back with me," she said, "I will show you my house."

They walked slowly along the narrow pathway towards the old house at the farther end. The Princess was evidently considering what to say.

"Why do you know that they are all wrong?" she said at last.

"Highness," said the boy after a pause, "I have never lived amongst, or seen anything, since I was born, but what was natural and real — the forest, the fruit-trees in blossom, the gardens, and the flowers. I have never heard anything except of God — of the wretchedness of sin — of beautiful stories of good people. My grandfather, when he was alive, used to talk to me, as I sat with him at his charcoal-burning in the forest, of my forefathers who were all honest and pious people. There are not many Princes who can say that."

The Princess did not seem to notice this last uncourtly speech.

"'I shall then find all my forefathers in Heaven,' I would say to him," continued Mark. "'Yes, that thou wilt! we shall then be of high nobility. Do not lose this privilege.' If I lose this privilege, how sad that will be! But here, in the palace, they think nothing of these things — instead of hymns they sing the strangest, wildest songs, so strange and beautiful that I fear and tremble at them as if the sounds were wicked sounds."

So talking, the Princess and the boy went

on through the lovely wood; at last they left the avenue and passed into the courtyard of a stately but decayed house. The walls of the courtyard were overgrown with ivy, and trees were growing up against the house and shading some of the windows. The Princess passed on without speaking, and entered the hall by an open door. As they entered, Mark could hear the sound of looms, and inside were several men and women at different machines employed in weaving cloth. The Princess spoke to several, and leading Mark onward she ascended a wide staircase, and reached at last a long gallery at the back of the house. Here were many looms, and girls and men employed in weaving. The long range of lofty windows faced the north, and over the nearer woods could be seen the vast sweep of the great Thuringian Forest, where Martin Luther had lived and walked. The risen sun was gilding the distant woods. A sense of indescribable loveliness and peace seemed to Mark to pervade the place.

"How happy you must be here, gracious Highness!" he exclaimed.

They were standing apart in one of the

windows towards the end of the long room, and the noise of the looms made a continuous murmur that prevented their voices being heard by the others who were near.

The Princess looked at Mark for some moments without reply.

"I must speak the truth always," she said at last, "but more than ever to such as thou art. I am not happy."

The boy looked at her as though his heart would break.

"Not happy," he said in a low voice, "and you so good."

"The good are not happy," said the Princess, "and the happy are not good."

There was a pause; then the Princess went on:

"The people who are with me are good, but they are not happy. They have left the world and its pleasures, but they regret them; they live in the perpetual consciousness of this self-denial — this fancy that they are serving God better than others are; they are in danger of becoming jealous and hypocritical. I warn you never to join a particular society which proposes, as its object, to serve God better than others.

You are safer, more in the way of serving God in the palace, even amid the singing and the music which seems to you so wicked. They are happy; they are thoughtless, gay, like the birds. They have at least no dark gloomy thoughts of God, even if they have no thoughts of Him at all. They may be won to Him, nay, they may be nearer to Him now than some who think themselves so good. Since I began this way of life I have heard of many such societies, which have crumbled into the dust with derision, and are remembered only with reproach."

Mark stood gazing at the distant forest without seeing it. He did not know what to think.

"I do not know why I have told you this," said the Princess; "I had no thought of saying such words when I brought you here. I seem to have spoken them without willing it. Perhaps it was the will of God."

"Why do you go on with this life," said Mark sadly, "if it be not good? The Prince would be glad if you would come back to the palace. He has told me so."

It seemed to the boy that life grew more

and more sad. It seemed that, baffled and turned back at every turn, there was no reality, no sincere walk anywhere possible. The worse seemed everywhere the better, the children of this world everywhere wiser than the children of light.

"I cannot go back now," said the Princess. "When you are gone I shall forget this; I shall think otherwise. There is something in your look that has made me speak like this."

"Then are these people really not happy?" said Mark again.

"Why should they be happy?" said the Princess, with some bitterness in her voice. "They have given up all that makes life pleasant — fine clothes, delicate food, cunning harmonies, love, gay devices, and sports. Why should they be happy? They have dull work, none to amuse or enliven the long days."

"I was very happy in my village outside the palace gates," said Mark quietly; "I had none of these things; I only taught the little peasants, yet I was happy. From morning to night the path was straigh before me, — a bright and easy path; and the end was always light. Now all is diffi-

cult and strange. Since I passed through the gates with the golden scrolls, which I thought were like the heavenly Jerusalem, all goes crooked and awry; nothing seems plain and righteous as in the pleasant old days. I have come into an enchanted palace, the air of which I cannot breathe and live; I must go back."

"No, not so," said the Princess, "you are wanted here. Where you were you were of little good. There were at least others who could do your work. Here none can do it but you. They never saw any one like you before. They know it and speak of it. All are changed somewhat since you came; you might, it is true, come to me, but I should not wish it. The air of this house would be worse for you even than that of the palace which you fear so much. Besides, the Prince would not be pleased with me."

Mark looked sadly before him for some moments before he said:

"Even if it be true what you say, still I must go. It is killing me. I wish to do right and good to all; but what good shall I do if it takes all my strength and life? I shall ask the Prince to let me go back."

"No," said the Princess, "not that — never that. It is impossible, you cannot go back!"

"Cannot go back!" cried Mark. "Why? The Prince is very kind. He will not keep me here to die."

"Yes, the Prince is very kind, but he cannot do that; what is passed can never happen again. It is the children's phrase, 'Do it again.' It can never be done again. You have passed, as you say, the golden gates into an enchanted world; you have known good and evil; you have tasted of the fruit of the so-called Tree of Life; you cannot go back to the village. Think."

Mark was silent for a longer space this time. His eyes were dim, but he seemed to see afar off.

"No," he said at last, "it is true, I cannot go back. The village, and the school, and the children have passed away. I should not find them there, as they were before. If I cannot come to you, there is nothing for me but to die."

"The Pagans," said the Princess, "the old Pagans, that knew their gods but dimly, used to say — 'The God-beloved die

young.' It has been said since by Christian men.—Do not be afraid to die. Instead of your form and voice there will be remembrance and remorse; instead of indifference and sarcasm there will be contrition; in place of thoughtless kindliness a tender love. Do not be afraid to die. The charm is working now; it will increase when sight is changed for memory, and the changeful irritation of time for changeless recollection and regret. The body of the sown grain is transfigured into the flower of a spiritual life, and from the dust is raised a mystic presence which can never fade. Do not be afraid to die."

Mark walked slowly back to the palace. He could not think; he was stunned and bewildered. He wished the Princess Isoline would have let him come to her. Then he thought all might yet be well. When he reached the palace he found everything in confusion. The Princess and her friend the *servente* had suddenly arrived.

VI.

Later on in the day Mark was told that the Princess wished to see him, and that he

must wait upon her in her own apartment. He was taken to a part of the palace into which he had hitherto never been; in which a luxurious suite of rooms was reserved for the Princess when she condescended to occupy them. The most easterly of the suite was a morning sitting-room, which opened upon a balcony or trellised verandah, shaded with jasmine. The room was furnished in a very different style from the rest of the palace. The other rooms, though rich, were rather bare of garniture, after the Italian manner — their ornaments consisting of cabinets of inlaid wood and pictures on the walls, with the centre of the room left clear. These rooms on the contrary, were full of small gilt furniture, after the fashion of the French court. Curious screens, depicting strange birds of gaudy plumage, embarrassed Mark as he entered the room.

The Prince was seated near a lady who was reclining in the window, and opposite to them was a stranger whom Mark knew must be the Count. The lady was beautiful, but with a kind of beauty strange to the boy, and her dress was more wonderful than

any he had yet seen, though it was a mere morning robe. She looked curiously at him as he entered the room.

"This, then," she said, "is the clown who is to educate my children."

At this not very encouraging address the boy stopped, and stood silently contemplating the group.

The Count was the first who came to his assistance.

"The youth is not so bad, Princess," he said. "He has an air of society about him, in spite of his youth."

The Prince looked at the Count with a pleased expression.

"Do not fear for the children, Adelaide," he said; "they will fare very well. Their manners are improved already. When they come to Vienna you will see how fine their breeding will be thought to be. Leave them to me. You do not care for them; leave them to me and to the Herr Tutor."

Mark was looking at the Count. This was another strange study for the boy. He was older than the Prince — a man of about forty; more firmly built, and with well-cut but massive features. He wore a peruke of

very short, curled hair; his dress was rich, but very simple; and his whole appearance and manner suggested curiously that of a man who carried no more weight than he could possibly help, who encumbered himself with nothing that he could throw aside, who offered in every action, speech, and gesture the least possible resistance to the atmosphere, moral, social, or physical, in which he found himself. His manner to the Prince was deferential, without being marked, and he evidently wished to propitiate him.

"Thou art very pious, I hear," said the Princess, addressing Mark in a tone of unmitigated contempt.

The boy only bowed.

"Is he dumb?" said the Princess, still with undisguised disdain.

"No," said the Prince quietly. "He can speak when he thinks that what he says will be well received."

"He is wise," said the Count.

"Well," said the Princess sharply, "my wishes count for nothing; of that we are well aware. But I do not want my children to be infected with the superstitions of the

past, which still linger among the coarse and ignorant peasantry. I suppose, now, this peasant schoolmaster believes in a God and a hell, and in a heaven for such as he?" and she threw herself back with a light laugh.

"No, surely," said the Count blandly, "that were too gross, even for a peasant priest."

"Tell me, Herr Tutor," said the Princess; and now she threw a nameless charm into her manner as she addressed the boy, from whom she wished an answer; "tell me, dost thou believe in a heaven?"

"Yes, gracious Highness," said Mark.

"It has always struck me," said the Prince, with a philosophic air, "that we might leave the poor their distant heaven. Its existence cannot injure us. I have sometimes fancied that they might retort upon me: 'You have everything here that life can wish: we have nothing. You have dainty food, and fine clothes, and learning, and music, and all the fruition that your fastidious fancy craves: we are cold and hungry, and ignorant and miserable. Leave us our heaven! At least, if you do not

believe in it, keep silence before us. Our belief does not trouble you; it takes nothing from the least of your pleasures; it is all we have.'"

"When the Prince begins to preach," said the Princess, with scarcely less contempt than she had shown for Mark, "I always leave the room."

The Count immediately rose and opened a small door leading to a boudoir. The Prince rose and bowed. The Princess swept to the ground before him in an elaborate curtsey, and, looking contemptuously, yet with a certain amused interest, at Mark, left the room.

The Prince resumed his seat, and, leaning back, looked from one to the other of his companions. He was really thinking with amusement what a so strangely-assorted couple might be likely to say to each other; but the Count, misled by his desire to please the Prince, misunderstood him. He supposed that he wished that the conversation which the Princess had interrupted should be continued, and, sitting down, he began again.

"I suppose, Herr Tutor," he said, "you

propose to train your pupils so that they shall be best fitted to mingle with the world in which they will be called upon to play an important part?"

The Prince motioned to Mark to sit, which he did, upon the edge of an embroidered couch.

"If the serene Highness," he said, "had wished for one to teach his children who knew the great world and the cities he would not have sent for me."

"What do you teach them, then?"

"I tell them beautiful histories," said Mark, "of good people, and of love, and of God."

"It has been proved," said the Count, "that there is no God."

"Then there is still love," said the boy.

"Yes, there is still love," said the Count, with an amused glance at the Prince; "all the more that we have got rid of a cruel God."

The boy's face flushed.

"How can you dare say that?" he said.

"Why," said the Count, with a simulated warmth, "what is the God of you pious people but a cruel God? He who con-

demns the weak and the ignorant — the weak whom He has Himself made weak, and the ignorant whom He keeps in darkness — to an eternity of torture for a trivial and temporary, if not an unconscious, fault? What is that God but cruel who will not forgive till He has gratified His revenge upon His own Son? What is that God but cruel —— But I need not go on. The whole thing is nothing but a figment and a dream, hatched in the diseased fancies of half-starved monks dying by inches in caves and deserts, terrified by the ghastly visions of a ruined body and a disordered mind — men so stupid and so wicked that they could not discern the nature of the man whom they professed to take for their God — a man, apparently, one of those rare natures, in advance of their time, whom friends and enemies alike misconceive and thwart; and who die, as He died, helpless and defeated, with a despairing cry to a heedless or visionary God in whom they have believed in vain."

As the Count went on, a new and terrible phase of experience was passing through Mark's mind. As the brain consists of

two parts, so the mind seems dual also. Thought seems at different times to consist of different phases, each of which can only see itself — of a faith that can see no doubt — of a doubt that can conceive of no certainty; one week exalted to the highest heaven, the next plunged into the lowest hell. For the first time in his life this latter phase was passing through Mark's mind. What had always looked to him as certain as the hills and fields, seemed, on a sudden, shrunken and vanished away. His mind felt emptied and vacant; he could not even think of God. It appeared even marvellous to him that anything could have filled this vast fathomless void, much less such a lovely and populous world as that which now seemed vanished as a morning mist. He tried to rouse his energies, to grasp at and to recover his accustomed thoughts, but he seemed fascinated; the eyes of the Count rested on him, as he thought, with an evil glance. He turned faint.

But the Prince came to his aid. He was looking across at the Count with a sort of lazy dislike; as one looks at a stuffed reptile or at a foul but caged bird.

"Thou art soon put down, little one," he said, with his kindly, lofty air. "Tell him all this is nothing to thee! That disease and distraction never created anything. That nothing lives without a germ of life. Tell the Count that thou art not careful to answer him — that it may be as he says. Tell him that even were it so — that He of whom he speaks died broken-hearted in that despairing cry to the Father whom He thought had deserted Him — tell the Count thou art still with Him! Tell him that if His mission was misconceived and perverted, it was because His spirit and method was Divine! Tell the Count that in spite of failure and despair, nay, perchance — who knows? — because even of that despair, He has drawn all men to Him from that cross of His as He said. Tell the Count that He has ascended to His Father and to thy Father, and, alone among the personalities of the world's story, sits at the right hand of God! Tell him this, he will have nothing to reply."

And, as if to render reply impossible, the Prince rose and, calling to his spaniel, who came at his gesture from the sunshine in

the window, he struck a small Indian gong upon the table, and the pages drawing back the curtains of the ante-chamber, he left the room.

The Count looked at the boy with a smile. Mark's face was flushed, his eyes sparkling and full of tears.

"Well, Herr Tutor," said the Count not unkindly, "dost thou say all that?"

"Yes," said the boy, "God helping me, I say all that!"

"Thou might'st do worse, Tutor," said the Count, "than follow the Prince."

And he too left the room.

VII.

The arrival of the Princess very much increased the gaiety and activity of life within the palace. Every one became impressed with the idea that the one thing necessary was to entertain her. The actors set to work to prepare new plays, new spectacles; the musicians to compose new combinations of quaint notes; the poets new sonnets on strange and, if possible, new conceits. As the Princess was very difficult

to please, and as it was almost impossible to conceive anything which appeared new to her jaded intellect, the difficulty of the task caused any idea that promised novelty to be seized upon with a desperate determination. The most favourite one still continued to be the proposition that Mark should be induced, by fair means or foul, to take a part upon the stage. His own character — the *rôle* which he instinctively played — was so absolutely original and fresh that the universal opinion was confident of the success of such a performance.

"By some means or other," said old Carricchio, "he must be got to act."

"You may do what you will with him," said the Signorina sadly; "he will die. He is too good to live. Like my little brother and the poor canary, he will die."

In pursuit, then, of this ingenious plan, the Princess was requested to honour with her presence a performance of a hitherto unknown character, to be given in the palace gardens. She at first declined, saying that she had seen everything that could be performed so often that she was sick of such things, and that each of their vaunted

and promised novelties proved more stale and dull than its precursor. It was therefore necessary to let her know something of what was proposed; and no sooner did she understand that Mark was to be the centre round which the play turned, than she entered into the plot with the greatest zeal.

It is, perhaps, not strange that to such a woman Mark's character and personality offered a singular novelty and even charm. The thought of triumphing over this child-like innocence, of contrasting it with the licence and riot which the play would offer, struck her jaded curiosity with a sense of delicious freshness, and she took an eager delight in the arrangement and contrivance of the scenes.

In expansion of the idea suggested by some of the wonderful theatres in Italy, where the open-air stage extended into real avenues and thickets, it was decided that the entire play should be represented in the palace gardens: and that, in fact, the audience should take part in the action of the drama. This, where the whole household was theatrical, and where the actors were trained in the Italian comedy, which left so

much to the *improvisatore* — to the individual taste and skill of the actor — was a scheme not difficult to realise.

The palace garden, which was very large, was disposed in terraces and hedges; it was planted with numerous thickets and groves, and, wherever the inequalities of the ground allowed it, with lofty banks of thick shrubs crowned with young trees, beneath which were arranged statues and fountains in the Italian manner. The hedges were cut into arcades and arches, giving free access to the retired lawns and shady nooks; and these arcades, and the lofty groves and terraces, gave a constant sense of mystery and expectation to the scene. The ample lawns and open spaces afforded more than one suitable stage, upon which the most important scenes of a play might be performed.

Beneath one of the highest and most important banks, which stretched in a perfectly straight line across the garden, planted thickly with flowering shrubs and fringed at the top with a long line of young trees, whose delicate foliage was distinct against the sky, was placed the largest of the fountains. It was copied from that in the Piazza

Santa Maria in Transtevere in Rome, and was ornamented with great shells, fish, and Tritons. On either side of the fountain, and leading to the terrace at the back, were flights of marble steps, with wide-stretching stone vases upon either side towering above the grass. In front of the fountain and of the steps, beyond a belt of greensward, were long hedges planted in parallel rows, and connected in arches and arcades, crossing and recrossing each other in an intricate maze, so that a large company, wandering through their paths, might suddenly appear and disappear. Beyond the hedges the lawn stretched out again, broken by flower-beds and statues, and fringed by masses of foliage and lofty limes. A sound of falling water was heard on all sides; and, by mysterious contrivance of concealed mechanism, flute and harp music sounded from the depths of the bosky groves.

Mark knew little of what was going on. He occupied himself mostly with his young pupils; but the conversation he had had with the Princess Isoline had troubled his mind, and a sense of perplexity and of

approaching evil weighed upon his spirits and affected his health. He, who had never known sickness in his peasant life, now, when confined to a life so unnatural and artificial, so out of harmony with his mind and soul, became listless and weak in body, and haunted by fitful terrors and failings of consciousness. He knew that some extraordinary preparations were being made; but he was not spoken to upon the subject, and paid little attention to what was going on. Indeed, had he been in the least of a suspicious nature, the entire absence of solicitation or interference might have led him to suspect some secret machination against his simplicity and peace, some contrived treachery at work; but no such idea crossed his mind, he occupied himself with his own melancholy thoughts and with the histories and parables which he related to his pupils.

On the morning of the day fixed for the performance, then, things being in this condition, Mark rose early. He had been informed that it was necessary that he should wear his best court-suit, which we have seen was of black silk with white

bands and ruffles. He gave his pupils a short lesson, but their thoughts were so much occupied by the expectation of the coming festivity that he soon released them and wandered out into the gardens alone. The performance of the play had been fixed for noon.

The day was bright and serene. The gardens were brilliant with colour and sweet with the perfume of flowers and herbs. Strains of mysterious harmony from secret music startled the wanderer along the paths.

Mark strayed listlessly through the more distant groves. He was distressed and dissatisfied with himself. His spirit seemed to have lost its happy elasticity, his mind its active joyousness. The things which formerly delighted him no longer seemed to please, even the loveliness of nature was unable to arouse him. He found himself envying those others who took so much real delight, or seemed to him to do so, in fantastic and frivolous music and jest and comic sport. He began to wonder what this new surprising play — these elaborately prepared harmonies — these swells and runs and shakes — might prove to be. Then he

hated himself for this envy — for this curiosity. He wished to return to his old innocence — his old simplicity.

But he felt that this could never be. As the Princess had told him, whatever in after years he might become, never would he taste this delight of his child's nature again. He was inexpressibly sad and depressed.

As he wandered on, not knowing where he went, and growing almost stupid, and indifferent even to pain, he found himself suddenly surrounded by a throng of dancing and laughing girls. It was easy, in this magic garden, to steal unobserved upon any one amid the bosky hedges and arcades; but to surprise one so abstracted as the dreamy and listless boy required no effort at all. With hands clasped and mocking laughter they surrounded the unhappy Mark. They were masqued, with delicate bits of fringed silk across the eyes, but had they not been so he was too confused to have recognised them. He tried in vain to escape. Then he was lifted from the ground by a score of hands and borne rapidly away.

The stories of swan-maidens and winged fairies of his old histories crossed his mind,

and he seemed to be flying through the air; suddenly this strange flight came to an end; he was on his feet again, and, as he looked confusedly around, he found that he was alone.

He was standing on a circular space of lawn, surrounded by the lofty wood. In the centre was an antique statue of a faun playing upon a flute. He seemed to recognise the scene, but could not in his confusion recall in what part of the vast garden it lay.

As he stood, lost in wonder and expectation, a fairy-like figure was suddenly present before him, from whence coming he could not tell. The slim and delicate form was dressed in a gossamer robe, through which the lovely limbs might be seen. She held a light masque in her hand, and laughed at at him with her dancing eyes and rosy mouth. It was the little Princess, his pupil.

Even now no thought of plot or treachery entered the boy's mind; he gazed at her in wondering amaze.

"You must come with me," said the girl-princess, holding out her hand; "I am sent to fetch you to the under world."

Behind them as they stood, and facing

the statue of the faun, was a cave or hollow in the wood, half concealed by the pendant tendrils of creeping and flowering plants. It seemed the opening of a subterranean passage. The child pushed aside the hanging blossoms and drew Mark, still dazed and unresisting, after her. They went down into the dark cave.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile from early dawn the palace had been noisy with pattering feet. For its bizarre population was augmented from many sources, and the great performance of the day taxed the exertions of all. As the morning advanced visitors began to arrive, and were marshalled to certain parts of the gardens where positions were allotted them, and refreshments served in tents. They were mostly masqued. Then strange groups began to form themselves before the garden front of the palace, and on the terraces. These were all masqued, and dressed in variety of incongruous and fantastic costumes, for though the play was supposed to be classical, yet the necessity of entertaining the Princess with something startling and lively was more exacting than artistic con-

gruity. As we have seen, the Prince had always inclined more to the fairy and masqued comedy than to the serious opera, and on this occasion the result was more original and fantastic than had ever before been achieved.

As the morning went on, there gradually arranged itself, as if by fortuitous incident, as strange a medley of fairy mediæval legend and of classic lore as eye ever looked upon. As the Prince and Princess, surrounded by their principal guests, all masqued and attired in every shade of colour and diversity of form, stood upon the steps before the palace, the wide gardens seemed full of groups equally varied and equally brilliant with their own. From behind the green screens of the hedges, and from beneath the arcades, figures were constantly emerging and passing again out of sight, apparently accidentally, but in fact with a carefully-devised plan. Strains of delicate music filled the air.

Then a group of girls in misty drapery, and masqued across the eyes, the same indeed that had carried off Mark, appeared suddenly before the princely group. They

had discovered in the deepest dell of their native mountain a deserted babe — the offspring doubtless of the loves of some wandering god. They were become its nurses, and fed it upon sacred honey and consecrated bread. Of immortal birth themselves, and untouched by the passing years, the boy became, as he grew up, the plaything, and finally the beloved of his beautiful friends. But the boy himself is indifferent to their attractions, and careless or averse to their caresses. He is often lost to them, and wanders in the mountain fastnesses with the fawns and kids.

All this and more was told in action, in song, and recitative, upon the palace lawns before this strange audience, themselves partly actors in the pastoral drama. Rural dances, and games and sacrifices were presented with delicately-conceived grouping and pictorial effect. Then the main action of the drama developed itself. The most lovely of the nymphs, the queen and leader of the rest, inspires a devoted passion in the heart of the priest of Apollo, before whose altar they offer sacrifice, and listen for guiding and response. She rejects his

love with cruel contempt, pining always for the coy and errant boy-god, who thinks of nothing but the distant mountain summits and the divine whispers of the rustling woods. The priest, insulted and enraged, invokes the aid of his divinity, and a change comes over the gay and magic scene. A terrible pestilence strikes down the inhabitants of these sylvan lawns, and gloomy funerals, and the pathetic strains of dirges take the place of dances and lively songs.

The terrified people throw themselves before the altar of the incensed Apollo, and the god speaks again. His anger can be appeased only by the sacrifice of the contemptuous nymph who has insulted his priest, or of some one who is willing to perish in her place. Proclamation is made across the sunny lawns, inviting a victim who will earn the wreath of self-sacrifice and of immortal consciousness of a great deed, but there is no response.

The fatal day draws on; the altar of sacrifice is prepared; but there spreads a rumour among the crowd — fanned probably by hope — that at the last moment a god will interfere. Some even speak of the

wandering boy, if he could only be found. Surely he — so removed from earthly and selfish loves, so strange in his simplicity, in his purity — surely he would lay down his guileless life without a pang. Could he only be found! or would he appear!

The herald's voice had died away for the third time amid a fanfare of trumpets. At the foot of the steps of the long terrace, by the Roman fountain, a delicate and lovely form stood on the grassy verge before the altar, by the leaping and rushing water's side; a little to the left, whence the road to Hades was supposed to come, stood the divine messenger, the lofty herald — clad in white, with a white wand; behind the altar stood the wretched priest, on whom the fearful task devolved, the passion of terror, of pity, and of love, traced upon his face; all sound of music had died away; a hush as of death itself fell upon the expectant crowd; from green arch and trellised walk the throng of masques, actors and spectators alike, pressed forward upon the lawn before the altar. . . . The priest tore the fillet from his brow and threw down his knife.

. . . . . .

The darkness of the cave gave place to a burst of dazzling sunlight as Mark and the little Princess, who in the darkness had resumed her masque, came out suddenly from the unseen opening upon one of the great stone bases by the side of the steps. To the boy's wonderstruck sense the flaring light, the mystic and awful forms, the thronged masques, the shock of surprise and terror, fell with a stunning force. He uttered a sharp cry like that of a snared and harmless creature of the woods. He pressed his hands before his face to shut out the bewildering scene, and, stepping suddenly backward in his surprise, fell from the edge of the stone platform some eight feet to the ground. A cry of natural terror broke from the victim, in place of the death-song she was expected to utter, and she left her place and sprang forward towards the steps. The crowd of masques which surrounded the Prince came forward tumultuously, and a hurried movement and cry ran through the people, half of whom were uncertain whether the settled order of the play was interrupted or not.

Mark lay quite still on the grass, his eyes

closed, the Signorina bending over him; but the herald, who was in fact director of the play, waved his wand imperiously before the masques, and they fell back.

"Resume your place, Signorina," he said, "this part of the play has, apparently, failed. You will sing your death-song, and the priest will offer himself in your stead."

But the girl rose, and, forcing her way to where the Prince stood, threw herself upon his arm.

"Oh, stop it, Highness, stop it!" she cried, amid a passion of sobs; "he is dying, do you not see!"

The Prince removed his masque; those around him, following the signal, also unmasqued, and the play was stopped.

THE END.

REVIEW.

The Little Schoolmaster Mark: A Spiritual Romance. By J. H. Shorthouse. (Macmillan.) From *The Academy,* December 29, 1883.

ON opening this little volume my first impulse was to hand it over at once to another reviewer. A review is an interpretation, and most often in the eyes of an author a misinterpretation — that is to say, a trifling, but none the less real, pain; and how could I run the risk of giving pain to a man who had gone out of his way to mention in his Preface a book of mine with something more than mere courtesy? And that my interpretation of *The Little Schoolmaster Mark* should seem mistaken and unfriendly was the more probable because, as I frankly confess, I had been among the few who disliked the work which had immediately secured the author's reputation — viz., *John Inglesant.* But on laying down Mr. Shorthouse's new story I feel impelled, in the teeth of all literary etiquette, and at the risk of apparent ungraciousness and ingratitude, to say a few words about it — in the first place, because the little book is charming; in the second place, because it seems a new

departure in our present fiction; and, in the third place, because I think it may not be useless to point out the reasons which make me hope that we may have no more *John Inglesants*, but as many more as possible of *Little Schoolmaster Marks*.

The two books are very unmistakably by the same author. They afford a peculiar pleasure by their complete negation of all the elements most common in modern writing — namely, realism, realistic psychology, care for intellectual and moral local colour, definiteness, and, if I may use an artist's word, impressionism in execution — the pleasure of something undefinably old-world, something which awakens the romantic and fantastic half-memories of certain books of the end of last century and beginning of this one, of Mrs. Radcliffe and Jean Paul Richter. It is a new style, this of Mr. Shorthouse, because it is an old one, with all the quaintness, childishness, and pathos of the obsolete. Moreover, in this short story, as in his long novel, Mr. Shorthouse is not merely what I must be permitted to call, in a very different sense, however, from that of the French word, a romantic;

he is essentially, to my mind (though perhaps he, more versed in books of devotion, may dispute the technical correctness of the word), a thing still stranger in the world of modern fiction — a mystic. His two books, long and short, are spiritual romances; the real action, the significance of the action, are in the inner world not of the consciousness studied by the psychologist (as in the case of an exquisite little work of which *Little Schoolmaster Mark* cannot fail to remind us, Mr. Pater's *Child in the House*), but of the soul studied by the priest. Romantic incident, quaint description, artistic reminiscences, are in these stories merely as the statues and pictures, the mosaics and gilding and brocade hanging, the tapers and incense of a church — pleasant things for the sense and fancy; but the thing we come to witness is none of these, it is an unseen mystery. Mr. Shorthouse has many of the characteristics of a mystic; he is lenient to many dogmas, because to him the only dogma is the spiritual light revealed to the individual soul; his asceticism is tempered by sense of beauty and playfulness; his world of reality is a mere cloudland; his

men and women are spectres, graceful or hideous; he has even that touching pleasure in pretty things which made the saints of the Middle Ages see visions of silk embroidered robes and cloth of silver stoles, and made them hear concerts of celestial music. Above all, he has the two special qualities of the poetical mystic — optimism and quietism. The incapacity of perceiving the realities of life, and especially its tragic and sordid harrowingness, gives him a sweetness which tinges with rose colour even his conceptions of evil, and which makes him consider morality not as the sternly required antidote to inevitable sin, but as a kind of spiritual beauty, an almost aesthetic perfection, to be sought for its own sake, and valued for its delightfulness. He is, even when he deals with wickedness and with crime, an optimist and a quietist; his villians are quite unsubstantial, and the virtue of his saints is quite useless. Fra Domenico Cavalca, in his lovely spiritual romance (as we might call it) of St. Mary Magdalen, tells his reader carefully that, though the Magdalen was a great sinner, her sinfulness consisted merely in giving scandal to good people by wearing

over-magnificent dresses, singing and dancing and even whistling on the staircase of Martha's house; and the anonymous monk, to whom we owe the *Fioretti di S. Francesco*, relates various curious encounters between the holy man of Assisi and a certain wolf, whom, however, he preached out of all carnivorous habits. I confess that, in reading Mr. Shorthouse's description of the Signorina — the charming little siren who tries to kiss Schoolmaster Mark and take him on her knees — I could not but think of Cavalca's Magdalen, who sinfully whistled upon the stairs; and that the terrible agnostic speeches of the wicked *cavaliere servente*, who disliked little Mark, reminded me of nothing so much as of the growls with which the wolf of Gubbio first greeted St. Francis. In this atmosphere of spiritual grace, of virtue which is almost an aesthetic quality, evil itself comes in for a share of innocence and sweetness. All this world of Mr. Shorthouse's is as dainty and diaphanous as the little pink and lilac towns, the little green and gold meadows, of the spiritual fairyland painted by Fra Angelico. Now imagine such a man as this, a Fra

Domenico Cavalca or an unnamed writer of the *Fioretti*, leaving his cell full of flowers and illuminated missals and organ sound, and, after a cursory glance at the external world, undertaking to write the history of a real man living in that real world, among its real conflicting duties, its real temptations and dangers; and imagine the sort of work which he will produce, once back in his cell, and with glances at the figures in the mass-book, at the trim flower-garden between the grating, to remind him of the appearance of a real man or of the real world. We can all tell the result — a picture of fantastic unreality of cloudland; a world such as never existed; men acting without conceivable motives, turning like weathercocks from vice to virtue, from virtue to vice; above all — and of this that same story by Cavalca gives a striking instance in the saintly behaviour of John the Evangelist, who, married to the Magdalen, abandons her for God on the wedding-night, and leaves her to console despair with sin — above all, beautiful souls doing dishonourable deeds for the sake of their own unruffled beauty. We can all understand such a work; and such a

work, if we substitute Mr. Shorthouse for the Italian legend-writer of the fourteenth century, we obtain in *John Inglesant*. This book, together with its old-world charm, has not merely the repulsiveness of obvious unreality, of a sweetly optimistic picture of things which, like the Catholicism of Innocent X and Molinos, our good sense cries out to us were foul; but the repulsiveness also of a spiritual progress, which, in the light of mere commonplace morality, is simply the gradual enervation and distortion of a man's sense of right and wrong.

An optimist cannot deal harmlessly with the evil he refuses to perceive; a quietist cannot judge healthily about matters of conduct; a mystic, in painting the world, will produce only an intolerable mixture of the sweet dreams which fill his mind and of the nasty realities which are before our eyes; hence, to me, the positive unwholesomeness and repulsiveness of a book like *John Inglesant*. But when the missal painter paints only missal borders, when the legend-monger writes only legends, when Mr. Shorthouse — this literary Fra Angelico with the vague humour and pathos of that mystic among

humorists, Jean Paul—gives us a purely imaginary story of imaginary virtue among imaginary beauty, glory, and wickedness, then we receive the delightful pleasure of what seems a new, an exotic, sort of art: the pleasure of such a story as this *Little Schoolmaster Mark*. Such a story is worth a dozen first-rate novels, because it transports us, like the missal paintings and the legendaries, into a world which, in its very unreality of sweetness, with its flowers embroidered with gold, its saints and angels surrounded by spiritual haloes, refreshes our mind and our heart, and enables us for a few moments to enjoy and to sympathise without asking whether we may not be enjoying the merely selfish or sympathising with the merely weak-hearted.

We require to look at life as an often ugly reality, and to think of our souls as machines which may injure or profit our neighbours; we require to be, for the vast bulk of our time, drearily and acutely awake. But, in order to be thus broad awake, it is necessary that sometimes, closing our eyes to reality, we refresh ourselves with a beautiful dream; and of such dreams—where beauty and virtue, temporal splendours and spiritual grace, blend marvellously into one another—Mr. Shorthouse's *Little Schoolmaster Mark* is certainly one of the most charming.

VERNON LEE.

The Bibelot

"At one time I had been ready to fall down and kiss the garment's hem, say of — of a 'Canterbury' editor (this, of course, when very, very young), as of a being from another sphere."

For those of us who are old enough to recall it the year 1891 saw the beginning of a new force in literature which brought to birth the first Kelmscott books and made the name of William Morris known, as never known before, to the English speaking people of the world. And along with this Renaissance of the Nineties emerged many new names of the younger generation of poets, romancers, artists, and essayists, gathered under a specific head — The Bodley Head, to wit, — whose work has in a manner come to its close, but in effect still exists as a motive power not yet spent.

In the late Eighties there were many literary projects under way, not the least being the inception of The Canterbury Poets, *edited by William Sharp and published by Walter Scott, coming out in monthly volumes at shilling apiece with from 300 to 500 pages, well printed within red rules,*

which in the course of ten years amounted to something like a century of volumes. In this series the well-known Ballades and Rondels (*1887*), *edited by Gleeson White, and the* Selections from the Greek Anthology, *chosen by Rosamund Marriott Watson* (*1887*), *were many times reprinted. To these must be added the Whitman volumes edited by Ernest Rhys, who was also in editorial charge of* The Camelot Series, *while a third series,* The Great Writers, *edited by Professor E. S. Robertson, reveals the measure of our indebtedness to one optimistic publisher and the men he attracted to his standard. It is easily seen that a great deal of youthful enthusiasm went to the planning of such volumes. And it is still more easy to see that what Mr. Mathews and Mr. Lane accomplished during the same period in part had its beginning and drew its following from the earlier and very excellent volumes which Mr. Walter Scott put to press.*

At this same time there was a budding morrow preparing in the midnight of Liverpool that found its first utterance when Mr. Richard Le Gallienne privately printed My Ladies' Sonnets and other "vain and amatorious verses" *in 1887—a choice little rarity for the bibliophile of to-day.*

It was followed in 1889 by Volumes in Folio *duly set forth by C. Elkin Mathews at The Sign of the Bodley Head, in Vigo Street, London, W.*

Again, two years later, and this at last brings us to the subject in hand, The Book-Bills of Narcissus, an account rendered *by Richard Le Gallienne appeared at the provincial press of Mr. Frank Murray, Derby, 1891. A second edition in larger type then came out in 1892, and in 1895 a revised text with a new chapter added saw the light. This third edition we should advise all lovers of the original* Book-Bills not *to read. The added chapter was an esthetic blunder, and the so-called revision may safely be relegated to the land of lost causes.*

In reprinting the chapter entitled A "Canterbury" Whitman *from the text of the first* Narcissus *we think our readers will agree that Mr. Le Gallienne might well look back to this section of his earliest prose as one of the most idyllic and beautiful things he ever wrote. The entire book, despite all clamour raised at the time, is suffused with a youthful joy of life that no later book of his has ever surpassed, wherein the episode of George Muncaster stands as a very real achievement, as, indeed,*

he was a very real and lovable person. These were the days when The Rhymers Club and their two books of verse were things to be treasured. They are not less treasurable now because silence has fallen and other voices have taken up the song.

Finally it is our belief that Le Gallienne has never had full credit given him for his efforts. The list at close of this issue covers this earlier work, not easily forgotten, although a thousand new poets arise and The Bodley Head and its memories are lost beneath the snows of yester-year.

There is moreover one volume announced by our poet that I for one have long wished might take shape and find its way into the choicest format of them all: Oblivion's Poppy: Studies of the Forgotten, *a volume of essays said to have been in preparation as far back as 1890. Alas! Richard my king, why not awaken to the fact of old implied obligations and give us as your swan song what the poppy of oblivion meant for you, and, evoked by the magic of poetic prose, might yet come to mean for us?*

FOR APRIL:

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC AND OTHER ESSAYS
BY HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD.

A "Canterbury" Whitman

By

Richard Le Gallienne.

THERE were, so to say, many secret societies of literature in those days — freemasonries of serious, enthusiastic youth, more or less affiliated. There was the secret society of Walt Whitman. Shall I ever forget the evening — of which, I confess, I have written before — when two such enthusiastic youths, on tramp through the English countryside, arrived at the drizzling end of the day at the welcome shelter of an inn, and entering a dreary and apparently deserted coffee-room, found, to their intense astonishment, a copy of *Leaves of Grass* lying on a table! Who on earth could it belong to in that outlandish bucolic spot?

As we vociferously gave vent to our delighted surprise, an arm-chair turned around from the fireside at the far end of the room, and a pleasant voice exclaimed, "So you know Whitman!" And then, of course, we sat up till the morning star, in rapt, transfiguring talk. Let us build three tabernacles! Such meetings in those days meant life-long friendships, as doubtless they still mean to youth with other more recent enthusiasms.

A "CANTERBURY" WHITMAN.

WHEN I spoke of London's men of genius I referred, of course, to such as are duly accredited, certificated, so to say, by public "censure;" but of those others whose shining is under the bushel of obscurity, few or many, how can one affirm. That there are such, any man with any happy experience of living should be able to testify; and I should say, for fear of misunderstanding, that I do not use the word genius in any technical sense, not only of men who can *do* in the great triumphal way, but also of those who can *be* in their quiet, effective fashion, within their own "scanty plot of ground;" men who, if ever conscious of it, are content with the diffusion of their influence around the narrow limits of their daily life, and to bend their creative instincts on the building and beautifying of home. It is no lax use of the word genius to apply it to such, for unless you profess the modern heresy that genius is but a multiplied talent, a coral-island growth, that earns its right to a new name only when it has lifted its head above the waters of oblivion, you must, in logic, agree. For "you saw at once," said

Narcissus, in reference to that poet, "that his writing was so delightful because he was more so." His writings, in fact, were but the accidental emanations of his personality. He might have given himself out to us in fugues, or canvasses, or simply, like the George Muncaster of whom I am thinking, in the sweet breath and happy shining of his home. Genius is a personal quality, and, if a man has it, whatever his hand touches will bear the trace of his power, an undying odour, an unfading phosphorescence. When Rossetti wrote "Beauty like hers is genius," he was not dealing in metaphor, and Meissonier should have abolished for ever the superstition of large canvasses.

These desultory hints of the development of Narcissus would certainly be more incomplete than necessity demands, if I did not try to give the Reader some idea of the man of genius of this unobtrusive type to whom I have just alluded. Samuel Dale used to call himself an "artist in life," and there could be no truer general phrase to describe George Muncaster than that. His whole life possesses a singular unity, such as is the most satisfying joy of a fine work of art,

considering which it never occurs to one to think of the limitation of conditions or material. So with his life, the shortness of man's "term" is never felt; one could win no completer effect with eternity than he with every day. Hurry and false starts seem unknown in his round, and his little home seems a microcosm of the Golden Age.

It would sometimes seem that he has an artistic rule even over his "accidents," for "surprises" have a wonderful knack of falling into the general plan of his life as though but waited for. Our first meeting with him was a singular instance of this. I say "our," for Narcissus and I chanced to be walking a holiday together at the time. It fell on this wise. At Tewkesbury it was we had arrived, one dull September evening, just in time to escape a wetting from a grey drizzle then imminent; and in no very buoyant spirits we turned into, I think it was, *The Swan* Inn. A more dismal coffee-room for a dismal evening could hardly be — gloomy, vast, and thinly furnished. We entered sulkily, seeming the only occupants of the sepulchre. However, there was a small book on the table facing the door, suffi-

ciently modern in appearance to catch one's eye and arouse a faint ripple of interest. "A Canterbury," we cried. "And a Whitman, more 's the wonder," cried Narcissus, who had snatched it up. "Why, someone 's had the sense, too, to cut out the abominable portrait. I wonder who it belongs to. The owner must evidently have some right feeling."

Then, before there was time for further exclamatory compliment of the unknown, we were half startled by the turning round of an arm-chair at the far end of the room, and were ware of a manly voice of exquisite quality asking, "Do you know Whitman?"

And moving towards the speaker, we were for the first time face to face with the strong and gentle George Muncaster, who since stands in our little gallery of types as Whitman's Camerado and Divine Husband made flesh. I wish, Reader, that I could make you see his face; but at best I have little faith in pen portraits. It is comparatively easy to write a graphic description of *a* face; but when it has been read, has the reader realised *the* face? I doubt it, and am inclined to believe that three differ-

ent readers will carry away three different impressions even from a really brilliant portrait. Laborious realism may, at least, I think, be admitted as hopeless. The only chance is in a Meredithian lightning-flash, and those fly but from one or two bows. I wonder if an image will help at all here. Think on a pebbly stream, on a brisk, bright morning; dwell on the soft, shining lines of its flowing; and then recall the tonic influence, the sensation of grip, which the pebbles give it. Dip your hand into it again in fancy; realise how chaste it is, and then again think how bright and good it is. And if you realise these impressions as they come to me, you will have gained some idea of George Muncaster's face — the essential spirit of it, I mean, ever so much more important than the mere features. Such, at least, seemed the meaning of his face even in the first moment of our intercourse that September dusk, and so it has never ceased to come upon us even until now.

And what a night that was! what a talk! How soon did we find each other out! Long before the maid knocked at the door, and hinted by the delicate insinuation of a

supposed ring that there was "a budding morrow" in the air. But our passionate generosity of soul was running in too strong a tide just then to be stemmed by any such interference; it could but be diverted; and Muncaster's bedroom served us as well wherein to squat in one of those close, rapt circles of talk such as, I think, after all, men who love poetry can alone know — men, anyhow, with *a* poetry.

Bed, that had for some time been calling us, unheeded as Juliet's nurse, had at last to be obeyed; but how grudgingly; and how eagerly we sprang from it at no late hour in the morning, at the first thought of the sweet new thing that had come into the world — like children who, half in a doze before waking, suddenly remember last night's new wonder of a toy, to awake in an instant, and scramble into clothes to look at it again. Thus, like children we rose; but it was shy as lovers we met at the breakfast-table, as lovers shy after last night's kissing. (Thou mayst not have loved a fellow-man in this way, Reader, but we are, any one of us, as good men as thee; so keep thy eyebrows down, I beseech thee.)

One most winsome trait of our new friend was soon apparent — as having, to our sorrow, to part at the inn door right and left, we talked of meeting again at one or the other's home — a delicate disinclination to irreverently "make sure" of the new joy; a "listening fear," as though of a presiding good spirit that might revoke his gift if one stretched out towards it with too greedy hands. "Rather let us part and say nought. You know where a letter will find me. If our last night was a real thing, we shall meet again, never fear." With some such words as those it was that he bade us good-bye.

Of course, letters found all three of us before a fortnight had gone by, and in course of time we found his home. There it is that George should be seen. Away he is full of precious light, but home is his setting. To Narcissus, who found it in that green period when all youngsters take vehement vows of celibacy, and talk much of "free love," all ignorant, one is in charity persuaded, of what they quite mean, that home was certainly as great and lasting a revelation as the first hour of "Poetry's divine first finger-touch." It was not that his own home-life had been

unhappy, for it was the reverse, and rich indeed in great and sweet influences; but it was rather, I think, that the ideal of a home is not so easily to be reached from that home in which one is a child, where one is too apt to miss the whole in consideration of one's own part in it, as from another on which we can look from the outside.

Our parents, even to the end, partake too much of the nature of mythology; it always needs an effort to imagine them beings with quite the same needs and dreams as ourselves. We rarely get a glimpse of their poetry, for the very reason that we ourselves are factors in it, and are, therefore, too apt to dwell on the less happy details of the domestic life, details which one ray of their poetry would transfigure as the sun transfigures the motes in his beam. Thus, in that green age I spoke of, one's sickly vision can but see the dusty, world-worn side of domesticity, the petty daily cares of living, the machinery, so to say, of "house and home." But when one stands in another home, where these are necessarily unseen by us, stands with the young husband, the poetry-maker, how different it all seems.

One sees the creation bloom upon it; one ceases to blaspheme, and learns to bless. Later, when at length one understands why it is sweeter to say "wife" than "sweetheart," how even one may be reconciled to calling one's Daffodilia "little mother" — because of the children, you know; it would never do for them to say Daffodilia — then he will understand too how those petty details, formerly so "*banal*," are, after all, but notes in the music, and what poetry can flicker, like its own blue flame, around even the joint purchase of a frying-pan.

That Narcissus ever understood this great old poetry he owes to George Muncaster. In the very silence of his home one hears a-singing — "There lies the happiest land." It was one of his own quaint touches that the first night we found his nest, after the maid had given us admission, there should be no one to welcome us into the bright little parlour but a wee boy of four, standing in the doorway like a robin that has hopped on to one's window-sill. But with what a dear grace did the little chap hold out his hand and bid us good evening, and turn his little morsel of a bird's tongue round our

names; to be backed at once by a ring of laughter from the hidden "prompter" thereupon revealed. O happy, happy home! may God for ever smile upon you! There should be a special grace for happy homes. George's set us "collecting" such, with results undreamed of by youthful cynic. Take courage, Reader, if haply you stand with hesitating toe above the fatal plunge. Fear not, you can swim if you will. Of course, you must take care that your joint poetry-maker be such a one as George's. One must not seem to forget the loving wife who made such dreaming as his possible. He did not; and, indeed, had you told him of his happiness, he would but have turned to her with a smile that said, "All of thee, my love;" while, did one ask of this and that, how quickly "Yes! that was George's idea," laughed along her lips.

While we sat talking that first evening, there suddenly came three cries, as of three little heads straining out of a nest, for "Father;" and obedient, with a laugh, he left us. This, we soon learnt, was a part of the sweet evening ritual of home. After mother's more practical service had been

rendered the little ones, and they were cosily "tucked in," then came "father's turn," which consisted of his sitting by their bedside, Owen and Geoffrey on one hand, and little queen Phyllis, maidenlike in solitary cot, on the other, and crooning to them a little evening song. In the dark, too, I should say, for it was one of his wise provisions that they should be saved from ever fearing that; and that, whenever they awoke to find it round them in the middle of the night, it should bring them no other association but "father's voice."

A quaint recitative of his own, which he generally contrived to vary each night, was the song, a loving croon of sleep and rest. The brotherhood of rest, one might name his theme for grown-up folk, as in the morning, we afterwards learnt, he is wont to sing them another little song of the brotherhood of work; the aim of his whole beautiful effort for them being to fill their hearts with a sense of the brotherhood of all living — flowers, butterflies, bees and birds, the milk-boy, the policeman, the man at the crossing, the grocer's pony, all within the circle of their little lives, as living and working in one

great camerarderie. Sometimes he would extemporise a little rhyme for them, filling it out with his clear, happy voice, and that tender pantomime that comes so naturally to a man who not merely loves children — for who is there that does not? — but one born with the instinct for intercourse with them. To those not so born it is as difficult to enter into the life and prattle of birds. I have once or twice crept outside the bedroom door when neither children nor George thought of eavesdroppers, and the following little songs are impressions from memory of his. You must imagine them chanted by a voice full of the infinite tenderness of fatherhood, and even then you will but dimly realise the music they have as he sings them. I run the risk of his forgiving my printing them here: —

MORNING SONG.

Morning comes to little eyes,
Wakens birds and butterflies,
Bids the flower uplift his head,
Calls the whole round world from bed.
Up jump Geoffrey!
Up jump Owen!!
Then up jump Phyllis!!!
And father 's going!

EVENING SONG.

The sun is weary, for he ran
  So far and fast to-day;
The birds are weary, for who sang
  So many songs as they?
The bees and butterflies at last
  Are tired out, for just think, too,
How many gardens through the day
  Their little wings have fluttered through.
  And so, as all tired people do,
They 've gone to lay their sleepy heads
Deep, deep in warm and happy beds.
The sun has shut his golden eye,
And gone to sleep beneath the sky;
The birds, and butterflies, and bees
Have all crept into flowers and trees,
And all lie quiet, still as mice,
Till morning comes, like father's voice.
So Phyllis, Owen, Geoffrey, you
Must sleep away till morning too;
Close little eyes, lie down little heads,
And sleep, sleep, sleep in happy beds.

As the Reader has not been afflicted with a great deal of verse in these pages, I shall also venture to copy here another little song which, as his bairns have grown older, George has been fond of singing to them at bedtime, and with which the Reader is not likely to have enjoyed a previous acquaintance: —

REST. [1]

When the Sun and the Golden Day
Hand in hand are gone away,
At your door shall Sleep and Night
Come and knock in the fair twilight;
Let them in, twin travellers blest;
Each shall be an honoured guest,
And give you rest.

They shall tell of the stars and moon,
And their lips shall move to a glad, sweet tune,
Till upon your cool, white bed
Fall at last your nodding head;
Then in Dreamland fair and blest,
Farther off than East and West,
They give you rest.

Night and Sleep, that goodly twain,
Tho' they go, shall come again;
When your work and play are done,
And the Sun and Day are gone
Hand in hand thro' the scarlet West,
Each shall come, an honoured guest,
And bring you rest.

Watching at your window-sill,
If upon the Eastern hill
Sun and Day come back no more,
They shall lead you from the door
To their kingdom calm and blest,
Farther off than East or West,
And give you rest.

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1 From a tiny privately-printed volume of deliciously original lyrics by Mr. R. K. Leather, since republished by Mr. Fisher Unwin, 1890.

Arriving down to breakfast earlier than expected next morning, we discovered George busy at some more of his loving ingenuity. He half blushed in his shy way, but went on writing in this wise, with chalk, upon a small blackboard: "*Thursday — Thor's-day — Jack the Giant Killer's day.*" Then, in one corner of the board, a sun was rising with a merry face and flaming locks, and beneath him was written, "*Phœbus-Apollo;*" while in the other corner was a setting moon, "*Lady Cynthia.*" There were other quaint matters, too, though they have escaped my memory; but these hints are sufficient to indicate George's morning occupation. Thus he endeavoured to implant in the young minds he felt so sacred a trust an ever-present impression of the full significance of life in every one of its details. The days of the week should mean for them what they did mean, should come with a veritable personality, such as the sun and the moon gained for them by thus having actual names, like friends and playfellows. This Thor's-day was an especially great day for them; for, in the evening, when George had returned from business, and there was yet an hour to

bedtime, they would come round him to hear one of the adventures of the great Thor — adventures which he had already contrived, he laughingly told us, to go on spinning out of the Edda through no less than the Thursdays of two years. Certainly his ingenuity of economy with his materials was no little marvel, and he confessed to often being at his wit's end. For Thursday night was not alone starred with stories; every night there was one to tell; sometimes an incident of his day in town, which he would dress up with the imaginative instinct of a born teller of fairy-tales. He had a knack, too, of spreading one story over several days which would be invaluable to a serial writer. I remember one simple instance of his device.

He sat in one of those great cane nursing chairs, Phyllis on one knee, Owen on the other, and Geoffrey perched in the hollow space in the back of the chair, leaning over his shoulder, all as solemn as a court awaiting judgment. George begins with a preliminary glance behind at Geoffrey: "Happy there, my boy? That 's right. Well, there was once a beautiful garden."

"Yes-s-s-s," go the three solemn young heads.

"And it was full of the most wonderful things."

"Yes-s-s-s."

"Great trees, so green, for the birds to hide and sing in, and flowers so fair and sweet that the bees said that, in all their flying hither and thither, they had never yet found any so full of honey in all the world. And the birds, too, what songs they knew; and the butterflies, were there ever any so bright and many coloured?" &c., &c.

"But the most wonderful thing about the garden was that everything in it had a wonderful story to tell."

"Yes-s-s-s."

"The birds, and bees, and butterflies, even the trees and flowers, each knew a wonderful fairy-tale."

"Oh-h-h-h."

"But of all in the garden the grasshopper knew the most. He had been a great traveller, for he had such long legs."

Again a still deeper murmur of breathless interest.

"Now, would you like to hear what the grasshopper had to tell?"

"Oh, yes-s-s-s."

"Well, you shall — to-morrow night!"

So off his knees they went, as he rose with a merry, loving laugh, and kissed away the long sighs of disappointment, and sent them to bed, agog for all the morrow's night should reveal.

Need one say that the children were not the only disappointed listeners. Besides, they have long since known all the wonderful tale, whereas one of the poorer grown-up still wonders wistfully what that grasshopper who was so great a traveller, and had such long legs, had to tell.

But I had better cease. Were I sure that the Reader was seeing what I am seeing, hearing as I, I should not fear; but how can I be sure of that? Had I the pen which that same George will persist in keeping for his letters, I should venture to delight the Reader with more of his story. One underhand hope of mine, however, for these poor hints is, that they may by their very imperfection arouse him to give the world "the true story" of a happy home. Nar-

cissus repeatedly threatened that, if he did not take pen in hand, he would some day "make copy" of him; and now I have done it instead. Moreover, I shall further presume on his forbearance by concluding with a quotation from one of his letters that came to me but a few months back: —

"You know how deeply exercised the little ones are on the subject of death, and how I had answered their curiosity by the story that after death all things turn into flowers. Well, what should startle the wife's ears the other day but 'Mother, I wish you would die.' 'O why, my dear?' 'Because I should so like to water you!' was the delicious explanation. The story has, moreover, been called to stand at the bar of experience, for a week or two ago one of Phyllis' gold-fish died. There were tears at first, of course, but they suddenly dried up as Geoffrey, in his reflective way, wondered 'what flower it would come to.' Here was a dilemma. One had never thought of such contingencies. But, of course, it was soon solved. 'What flower would you like it to be, my boy?' I asked. 'A poppy,' he answered; and after consultation, 'a

poppy!' agreed the others. So a poppy it is to be. A visit to the seedsman's procured the necessary surreptitious poppy seed, and so now poor Sir Goldfish sleeps with the seed of sleep in his mouth, and the children watch his grave day by day, breathless for his resplendent resurrection. Will you write us an epitaph?"

Ariel forgive me! Here is what I sent:—

Five inches deep Sir Goldfish lies;
  Here last September was he laid;
Poppies these, that were his eyes,
  Of fish-bones are these blue-bells made;
His fins of gold that to and fro
Waved and waved so long ago,
Still as petals wave and wave
To and fro above his grave.
Hearken, too! for so his knell
Tolls all day each tiny bell.

I. My Ladies' Sonnets | and other "vain and ama | torious verses," with some | of graver mood, by Richard Le | Gallienne. | (Liverpool) Privately Printed, 1887.
Sq. 16mo, (4½ x 5⅛) Bds. Pp. VIII : 1-148, hand-made paper, red and black throughout.

II. Volumes in Folio : By Richard Le Gallienne. (Motto) London : C. Elkin Mathews, at the Sign of the Bodley Head, in Vigo Street, W., 1889.
Fcap 4to, (5 x 6¾) Bds. Pp. XII : 1-92. (250 copies on Van Gelder hand-made paper.)

III. English Poems : By Richard Le Gallienne. London : Mathews & Lane, 1892.
Post 8vo. Bds. Pp. XII : 1-132.
800 copies for England and America on alleged hand-made paper. This to be "letter perfect" should have "laid in" a four-page leaflet—"Three Poems Printed for Private Circulation only."

IV. Robert Louis Stevenson, an elegy and other poems mainly personal by Richard Le Gallienne. London, 1895.
Cr. 8vo. cloth, Pp. VIII : 1-100.

V. The Book-Bills of Narcissus, an account rendered by Richard Le Gallienne. Derby. Frank Murray, 1891.
FIRST EDITION. Post 8vo. Wrappers. 100 copies on hand-made paper, Pp. X : 1-88.
SECOND EDITION. Cr. 8vo. Buckram. Derby,

1892. Also 25 large paper copies. Buckram. Pp. x : 1-144.

THIRD EDITION. London and New York. 1895. Revised and a new chapter (v) added, presumably to secure American copyright. Dedicated *To Mildred* in a sonnet. A deplorable Frontispiece belongs in this edition. 12mo. cloth. Pp. vi : 1-173. Chapter VII here becomes VIII and is entitled "George Muncaster," who in actual life was Robinson Kay Leather, author of the little book, *Verses*, quoted from in text, who died shortly after its publication in 1891. That his was a lovable personality, Mr. Le Gallienne's citations leave no doubt.

I can never forget the first of many readings of *Retrospective Reviews* (Crown 8vo, 2 vols. London, 1896). It contains more real love of literature, old and new, than I have yet found elsewhere. See also *Attitudes and Avowals* (New York, 1910) wherein Richard is himself again, — "one of those candles by which we behold the sun."

The Bibelot

OF *the five musical papers forming the third section of Mr. Henry Noel Brailsford's* Adventures in Prose: A Book of Essays, (*London, 1911,*) *four seem unified into a concrete whole, in which the writer's most exquisite expression is given in* The Spell of Old Music. *The subject is then carried over into a very careful exposition of* Handel's Largo, *followed by* The Sea in Music, *which expands with still fuller measure of musical intent Debussy's symphonic suite,* The Sea.

The closing essay Of Fauns and Oboes *largely consists of an ironic elaboration of Debussy's orchestration of* The Afternoon of a Faun, *along the lines of "the animal gaiety of the French decadent;" and, in somewhat fanciful mood, Mr. Brailsford invokes the Slavonic shade of Tolstoy with whom he holds imaginary converse. Finally our sweet singer of essays accords Debussy, as an interpreter of Mallarmé, the "ambiguous tribute" of making* L'Apres-Midi d' un Faune *musically intelligible.*[1]

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1 *This is no small triumph, as one may perceive by reading Mr. Edmund Gosse's Symbolism, and M. Stephane Mallarmé, in* Questions at Issue, (*1895*).

If we say of Mr. Brailsford that he deals in suggestion only, we disarm criticism; since what else should a musical essayist attempt? One may still further affirm that, as pictures are not wholly painted by artists for their brethren in art, so these themes as developed are not wholly from the standpoint of the musician for the mere amateur of music. We take them to be addressed as Browning intended his Toccata *or his* Abt Vogler *should be taken,— for those who mingle with their love and comprehension of melody a still deeper enjoyment of the poetic images which melody invokes.*

It may be interesting, as a musical friend suggests, to quote from a contemporary American writer[1] *who voices contrasting opinions on similar subjects, — Mr. Brailsford markedly proscribing the limitations of musical expression to "physical emotions alone," Mr. Mason granting to its scope, not only these emotions, but also the inherent traits and qualities of the characters portrayed by the musical composition, the latter taking as an example Strauss'* Salomé, *in connection with which he says: "When Strauss wants to convey the weakness and depravity of Herod, he does so partly by the*

[1] Modernism in Music, *by Redfern Mason in Atlantic Monthly for January, 1910.*

use of a theme based on a scale of whole tones . . . . to portray degeneracy. It jars on the ear, but not more so than the character of Herod, on the mind. Through the use of effects ungrateful to the ears, Strauss deepens the moral significance of music. . . . The music of John the Baptist *is gravely diatonic; that of* Salomé *is chromatic. Herod is portrayed in music as abnormal as his character. Richard Strauss' tone poems diffuse atmosphere, describe character, tell history." . . . Of Debussy he says, "Debussy makes use of abnormal aspects of tonality. Like his teachers, the singers of* Noels et Chansons, *spiritual, he turns lovingly to the ancient modes of the church, using scales of strange beauty, though long despised by Philistines as barbarous. . . . The narrowly orthodox regard him as the high priest of decadence, but his followers say that, like Bach and Wagner before him, Debussy is a generation ahead of the schools. . . . They recognize in Debussy the musician of the vague, the intangible, the elusive."*

Since Mr. Brailsford wrote that the "chapter in the æsthetics of music" still remained unwritten, the final word has *been expressed, by that unparalleled ensemble of wind instruments,* The Barrère Ensemble, *founded by M. George Barrère. Through*

this medium, which is an organization of "pastoral instruments," so called in the essay, Of Fauns and Oboes, *musical interpretation reaches all heights within the realm of its own field of possibilities, each wind instrument forming a mellow organ note, "as if the song and the organ's tones melted together," in a processional of gliding tone-pictures: "the shadows of our own inner soul" evoked by music magic; and every dissonance of the soul dissolves into harmony. Thus music becomes universal, as it reaches the heart of the world's rhythmic law.*

Adventures in Prose *would seem to be Mr. Brailsford's first appearance in covers. Besides the four essays we have chosen there remain others which we may hope to offer our readers later on. These now given will at least show the value of this small volume which deserves to be placed beside the best of Mr. E. V. Lucas, of Mr. Hilaire Belloc and of Mr. H. W. Nevinson.*

FOR MAY:

TRANSLATIONS FROM THEOCRITUS
BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC
AND OTHER ESSAYS
By
HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD.

I.

THE SPELL OF OLD MUSIC.

THERE is always something ghostly in a concert of old music. One listens to the fairy clatter of the harpsichord. One strains to catch under the harsher and robuster tones of the violins the modest sweetness of the viola di gamba — that "beautiful and ineffectual angel" among stringed instruments. The grave padouane sweeps along with its stately rhythms. But when the shock of surprise is over, when you have remembered of what angelic player in a Bellini altar-piece the bowing of the viol player reminds you, when you have trained your ear to blend the tinkle of the harpsichord with the sighing of the strings, there creeps over you the first touch of an uncanny presence. It is like the cold breath of wind, or the swish of an unseen skirt which accompanies the visitation of the ghost in the haunted castle. There is nothing of this ghostliness in an old picture. A cavalier of Franz Hals laughs and drinks on the canvas with the same robust colouring, the same material body, which was his glory in life. He casts a shadow where he stands.

His song rouses an echo in the rafters. He seems as real as that old lady your great-grandmother, who used to alarm you in your childhood by enquiring in her hours of dotage what news there was of Boney, and whether the King were still mad, poor man. It is otherwise with old music. One may see an old canvas with contemporary eyes. But a suite by Christian Bach is never a personal experience. One cannot hear it for the first time. Some magic of reminiscence haunts the ear. One gazes into the faces of the audience, as Shelley used to interrogate the babies on Magdalen Bridge, to see dawning in them the recollection of an innate idea. It is some distant and baffling memory which stirs in the brain. One seeks for the clue as one tries half-awake to recover the plot of a dream. It is like hearing after twenty years the words of some childish spell that used to send us to sleep amid the hobgoblins and shadows of the nursery. Once, it seems to us, we had the ears that vibrated to these rhythms; once we had the feet that moved to these solemn measures. But there mingles with these physical recollections a more conscious

historical effort. We see in a pageant before us the gay ladies who haunted Browning when he heard Galuppi's Toccata. We know how Christian Bach and C. F. Abel gave just such concerts as this in eighteenth century London. Dr. Burney disputed with them, when he had heard this very sonata, and Fanny watched the fine ladies in their audience that she might satirise them in *Evelina*. The ghosts throng round us — ghosts from books, ghosts from fancy, ghosts from pictures, but above all that hereditary ghost which haunts our own ears, the ghost of that great-grandmother who clattered herself upon her harpsichord, while our grandfather played about her knees.

Such an experience is still a too rare pleasure. Miss Hannah Bryant provided it on Wednesday last in a programme of music revived for the first time in London. It was drawn from two centuries, and included works by J. H. Schein, who was born in 1586 — a name unknown to Grove's "Dictionary" — and Christian Bach, who died in 1782. Three items in it must have been written somewhere about the second

decade of the seventeenth century. The programme, in short, bridged the time from Shakespeare to Dr. Johnson. One listened, curious to understand from these specimens the place that such music had in the lives of such amateurs as Milton. The three specimens from the early seventeenth century had, to the unaccustomed ear, a startling similarity. One hardly distinguished what was personal in the styles of the three composers. They had all a naïve and primitive solemnity — and it is solemnity which such a writer as Milton seems most often to associate with music. The strings moved steadily through padouane and allemande almost as voices move through a chorale, steady, unflagging and balanced. There were neither pauses nor tricks of rhythm. Each instrument was continually occupied, and the effect on a small scale came near resembling that ultra-modern polyphony in orchestration which employs the full resources of the whole band from the first to the last bar of a composition. The effect was impressive, but it would also have been a little monotonous if it had not been strange. The most individual and the most

pleasing of all three compositions was to my thinking the Pasameza of Thomas Simpson — an Englishman who found fame in Germany at a time when our native musicians were an article of export. Here were the beginnings of a free handling of the instruments, a striving for variety, a sense for the dramatic possibilities of relief and change. A century later the last trammels of this antique stiffness, this primitive straightforwardness, had wholly vanished, and the concerto by John Humphries (not to be confused with the vain little Pelham Humfrey of Pepys's *Diary*), with which this delightful concert closed, sparkled with gaiety, audacity, and grace.

We have all of us dropped into the habit of thinking of music as the most universal of all the arts. It has no dialects; it has no dead languages. We are stirred by the manly sweep of an old crusader's hymn. Tschaikowsky moves us more readily than Elgar. Apart from its antiquarian interest, and its alluring historical suggestions, this old music means something to us. Its solemnity hushes, its grace delights us; our blood dances to its rhythms, and obeys in

it a certain physical excitement. Yet the amateur who chooses to be honest with himself will make a frank confession. This old music carries with it no emotional appeal. It is as cold as some bridal robe in taffeta which hangs near the great coaches and the painted sedan chairs in the Musée de Cluny. You may listen to it for a couple of hours, admirably played as it was played by Miss Hannah Bryant and her colleagues. But your pulse beats no faster. You go out as you came in, curious, pleased, reflective, but unmoved. You have none of that sense that "virtue has gone out" of you, that you have come through a deep, perhaps an awful experience, which weighs upon you after you have listened to great modern music. You are conscious of a dilettante satisfaction, but you have not partaken in a direct emotion.

Was it merely so that these old composers intended to affect us? Music is not, after all, a universal language. Listen to an Albanian ballad singer, with his nasal falsetto and his baffling quarter-tones. You are first amused, then bewildered, and at last moved to mere melancholy. His native

hearers meanwhile have been lashed to passion, it may be a warlike and energetic passion. And so it must have been with this old music, which is to us so slight and quaint, even when it is also gracious and pleasing. Men wrote of it then as though it conveyed to them emotions as overwhelming as Beethoven or Tschaikowsky convey to us. It stirred them to tears, when we are coldly curious. That faint suggestion of a graceful melancholy, that just perceptible haunting of a tender sadness, which is for us so oddly sweet, was for them an overpowering experience, as the funeral march in the Eroica is for us. "I am never merry," said Shylock's Jessica, "when I hear sweet music." But merry is precisely what we are when we listen to these old-world passions. We smile one to another, as we listen, just as we smile at the emotions of a gracious child. To the Elizabethan it had "a dying fall — like the sweet south, that breathes upon a bank of violets." Those suggestions of shadowy courtiers moving in unreal measures in demolished halls, those were not the impressions which these solemn dances made on the ears of those for whom they

were composed. "Even that vulgar and tavern-musick, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion and a profound contemplation of the first composer." So said Sir Thomas Browne, and so might we say of the secular music of our own time. But the music which struck in him a "deep fit of devotion" has lost that power over us. We have trained our emotions to obey only the more powerful stimuli of more developed music. We cannot hear these old airs with natural ears. The harpsichord can carry us clattering into faerie, but it cannot stir a direct human emotion. It is for us primarily not a piano, as the viola di gamba is primarily not a 'cello. We err only when we conclude that because we listen coldly, these old composers wrote coldly. We open the gates of our hearts only to the assault of rushing eloquence in sound. In the old days a sweet suggestion, a gracious hint, carried the soul with violence and by storm.

II.

ON HANDEL'S LARGO.

THE anniversary of Handel's death fell this year (1907) on a Sunday, and Mr. Wood, who has the instinct for occasions, celebrated it very worthily at his Queen's Hall concert. One is tempted to ask, however, what happens when the anniversary falls on a week day. For somehow or other it is always Sunday in England when Handel is played. His operas and his chamber music are hardly allowed to find their way to the heart of the English public, and he lives among the immortals by his religious work alone. It was so even in his life. He poured forth melodious operas, which beat the Italians on their own ground, and the town wits only wrote epigrams about Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee. He composed the "Messiah," and a grateful nation buried him in Westminster Abbey. And yet it was in his purely secular moods that he had some of his happiest and most royal inspirations. His orchestral suites are sometimes played in London, when a German conductor, innocent of English prejudices, comes over on a flying visit, although

there is hardly in all the range of old-world music, outside the Brandenburg Concertos, such a glory of motion, such a rush of vitality, such a flood of gaiety and joy. But a really typical English audience would probably be a little shocked to realise that its Handel has a great place among purely secular composers. An exquisite Hebrew love-sequence came down to the mediæval Church with Solomon's name upon it, and the Church found sacred wisdom in it. Handel's Largo in G has delighted generations of Englishmen, and because it is Handel's we have heard religion in it.

Certainly as the gracious stately melody was played on Sunday it did really sound religious. M. Sons, who played the solo part, is not an Englishman, but like Handel himself he has made England his home; the harp helped the illusion, and the organ, discreetly pervading the whole accompaniment, removed the last lingering doubt. Here and there in the audience a voice joined modestly and almost unconsciously in what its owner clearly felt to be a sort of anthem. There is, after all, no reason, as John Wesley put it, why the devil should

have all the best tunes, and the Largo, "arranged" in this edifying manner by a Viennese gentleman, has doubtless been snatched for all time from the world and the flesh. And yet as Handel wrote it, it certainly meant nothing at all religious. The quaint words of the banale Italian libretto have left on record the impression which he wished to convey, when first he wrote *Ombra mai fù* as an operatic air. It turns on the episode in the story of Xerxes,

> when he stayed
> His march to conquest of the world, a day
> I' the desert, for the sake of the superb
> Plane tree, which queened it there in solitude.

Nothing could be less sublime or more mundane than the words of the address to the tree. The only definite idea which they express is satisfaction ("I find no other place so fair") and peace ("thunders, lightnings and storms never outrage its dear peace"). There is much about "the never-dying shade of the vegetable," but nothing at all about God. "A book of verses underneath the bough" (perhaps even a jug of wine), and not the sacred suggestions of the organ and the harp ought rather to be

latent in the melody. The Greek sceptics used to meet the stoic wiseacres with the assertion that every truth could be countered by its contrary, and they made war on all wisdom by marshalling these oppositions. When the devotees of Strauss and programme music come forward with their faith in the power of a musical phrase to express some definite meaning, or to conjure up some precise and single image, one is tempted to array against them a series of musical contradictions. If the same air can express the most opposite ideas, one is tempted to conclude that no air expresses any idea at all. An English Sunday school finds scope for its religious feeling in the air which has been set to "When Mothers of Salem." A rollicking band of German students finds that the same air moves them to breathless cups and chirping mirth in the maddest moment of a Kneipe. It is all a question of speed. Largo it is edifying, presto it is hilarious; largo it is religious, presto it belongs to the flesh and the devil. The same air will serve to describe the fiery determination of the Scots at Bannockburn to do or die, or depict the gentle end of the

unheroic peasant who was "wearing awa'" to the "Land o' the Leal." There is a sombre ecclesiastical air of a moving but melancholy beauty, which the 'cellos give out in Tschaikowsky's "1812." It seems to answer the almost flippant "Marseillaise" (Tschaikowsky must have been something of a Jingo to make the "Marseillaise" so trivial). It opposes Holy Russia to revolutionary France. It is the air which the English churches have set to "Rock of Ages." I mentioned this to a Russian friend the other day. He seemed at first a little shocked by my admiration, and then he grudgingly admitted that the air was moving. So, at least, he judged by its effects. It is the air which the Black Hundred sing when they march out to make a specially bloody "pogrom."

For the purpose of a mere sceptic in music it might be enough to set out these contradictions, and leave them to shout confusion to the doctrinaires of the programme and the "leading motive." But in all candour they mean something more positive than a merely anarchical conclusion. The suggestion of a melody can never be

precise. It cannot render the whole intricate content of the words with which it is associated. It conveys something more general than any word, a suggestion more universal and more subtle. A certain ascending sequence in one of Strauss' songs may seem to fit exactly the word "Himmel-Blau" which it accompanies. It can suggest "azure," but I suspect it would suit a "mountain" or "ideality" quite as happily. But it would not suggest "dark blue," or "true till death." This I suspect, is the inner truth about Handel's Largo.

Beethoven has been the victim of a similar trick. The slow movement of the Second Symphony has a not dissimilar beauty. Gracious it is, placid, contented, moving with exquisite sweeps and large, easy gestures, free from all thought of struggle or assertion. Indolent is the word which most aptly fits its grace, and if it calls up an image, it is of sunny meadows, warm skies, and grateful shades — the imagery of Omar's "bough," and Handel's plane-tree. But it has met the same fate as the Largo. It has been set, not inappropriately, in a popular collection as a religious song of

praise and gratitude ("My God and King"). The moods, after all, have some common denominator. In an indolent contentment that is innocent yet purely sensuous, and in the exaltation of a saint who in a moment of mingled resignation and gratitude sees the world fair, orderly and good, there is a common emotional factor. The mystics have often translated the imagery of one state into the symbolism of the other. Music does but follow their lead. Analyse, for example, the imagery of that exquisite, sacred Hebrew lyric "The Lord is my Shepherd." The picture is one of sensuous contentment amid green pastures and running brooks. In so far as that contentment is physical, music could express it, but so far only. In both states the sensuous and the religious, we agree that all is right with the world; in both we are passive; in both we are pleased, with a pleasure that brings with it no stimulus to eager action or violent joy; in both states passivity and approval make for a certain dignity. So much music can express. The difference begins when the Saint traces his contentment with the earth to the First Cause who made it,

whereas the worldling is content to accept and enjoy. This difference music cannot and does not express, because it is an intellectual and not an emotional difference. It is the physical basis of emotion which dictates the "mode" of music, and the physical basis is necessarily simple, general, and vague. Music is neither secular nor religious. It can at best suggest the beating of the pulse, the rhythm of the blood that accompanies a given order of ideas.

III.

THE SEA IN MUSIC.

In simple and primitive societies it was at one time expected of a minstrel that he should be blind. Homer, to be sure, has become for modern criticism a composite and multitudinous personality. But one fact about him no scholar will abandon. Homer was undoubtedly blind — a proposition which must be interpreted in the light of modern knowledge to mean that all and each of him were blind. How else should he have built up his rhythms and his cadences, his resounding lines, his melodies that dance upon six feet? His case suggests an important reform in the education of modern musicians. It is, to be brief, that, at an early period of their spiritual development, they should all be blinded, painlessly, if possible, but still effectively. Eyes are useful in music for the purposes of study. But at the first sign of a real talent for composition, the regrettable, but indispensable, operation should be humanely performed. Delay it even for a year, and the most promising musician may be lured away by the pride of life, and the beckoning

of a too interesting visual world. It was the hearing of some of the work of M. Debussy the other day which suggested this painful conclusion. Let no one think these sentences hasty or unjust. M. Debussy was plainly visible when he conducted his symphonic suite, *The Sea*, on an earlier occasion at the Queen's Hall. He is not blind. The result must have convinced every unprejudiced mind of the necessity of this drastic reform. M. Debussy has written three long movements about the sea, and he has written them with his eyes.

It was purely sensuous work, sensitive, strange, and very clever, but in its total rejection of every intellectual element in music so nearly wearisome that one's thoughts went straying as one listened. What sea, one asked, was it that Debussy was describing? It was no real sea at all, but more probably a seascape painted in a studio by some modern impressionist for a Paris Salon. It had waves and it had atmosphere. It had a changing sky. The dawn crept up across it, and the noonday sun lay over it, placid and cloudless and bright. It was, in short, the sea of the

eyes, the sea which makes in us all a visual excitement, and sends us, if we have the skill, to our canvases and palettes. He had taken this visual sea, and tried to render it by little intricate rhythms and chromatic passages, to translate the world of sight painfully and elaborately into the world of sound.

The musician who tries to rival the painter by describing external things, is a magician who has thrown aside his wand to wield a quarter-staff. The relations of the two arts to the emotions which call forth their exercise are fundamentally different, and music has the incomparable advantage in its freedom and in its scope for the expression of personality. A painter has a subject which interests him — an expressive face, a landscape which reveals some rare and arresting play of light, a scaffolding in process of erection, like those amazing creations of Mr. Muirhead Bone's, where ropes and poles and heaps of ruin tell of the miracle of human energy. The scene has made in his mind a ferment, a powerful visual excitement. So far his experience does not differ from the musician's. Each

is, no doubt, dependent, though in very different degrees, upon external stimulus. To the painter there is always something seen. To the musician it may be an event, a personal experience, an historic moment, or even some actual sound. The painter goes home, and his task is to render upon canvas not so much his own excitement as its cause. He selects, he emphasises, he idealises, and he adds the element of achievement and craftsmanship. But still his main business is to record in color and line, not his emotion, but the outward thing, which was its occasion. The musician, on the contrary, starts beyond his stimulus. He need not dally with it, nor seek to reproduce it. His business is entirely with the emotions and the audible excitement which it has stirred within him. He sings not battle, but the joy of battle; not death, but the terror and majesty of death; not the sea, but the mystery and grandeur of the sea. His medium, be it never so elaborate, is a development of song and dance, of rhythm and melody, of pure emotional expression, and not of the arts of reproduction and imitation. His impulse, once given

to him, matters nothing to his hearer. The prattle of children, the stir of springtide woods, the riotous merriment of birds — all may excite him, but his work when it is finished will express only his sympathetic joy, his emotional reaction and response to these various incitements. It matters nothing to his hearers whether in fact it was child or bird or wood which gave him his starting point.

They say that the startling and emphatic phrase which opens Beethoven's Fifth Symphony had its origin in a knock upon his door. But who cares to ask whether the knocker really beat to that rhythm? What matters is the suggestion of surprise, and the development of the phrase until it comes to have a world-shaking significance, and to express the breaking of the outer world of force and destiny upon the seclusion of the soul. What matters even more is the smooth-flowing phrase, begotten of no external incentive whatever, in which the soul appears to give its tranquil answer to the world. There is a movement in the Pastoral Symphony which Beethoven himself labelled "The Brook." It does not describe

a brook. It renders rather the gentle flow of spirits which the monotonous murmur of a brook may occasion. If Beethoven had been impressed, as Strauss was, by the spectacle of a baby in its bath, he would not have tried to reproduce the noise of splashing water. He would have rendered his own humorous excitement in rollicking rhythms and truncated melodies. If he had been impressed, as Strauss was, by the sight of a flock of sheep, he would not have made his orchestra bleat for three minutes on end. One might wager that he would have written a fugue to express the excitement of multitudinous motion and pattering feet.

The intelligent partisan of "absolute" music will complain, not that Debussy went down to the sea, watched the sun rise and the frolic of the waves, or heard the wind in rude argument with the waters. His complaint will be rather that Debussy stayed there, that he settled down as a painter might, with a camp-stool and an easel, and was content to try to reproduce in sound a sort of parallel to the sights which moved him. His sea, in consequence, is a literal and purely external thing. It is the sea

that tosses and undulates, that glints and darkens. It is that and nothing more.

A blind musician would have cared nothing for the sea as an independent object. He would have drawn from it, as Debussy does not, its emotional significance. He would have felt and rendered the excitement that comes from the wind and the salt spray upon one's cheeks. The sea, after all, is not mere water. It is a state of the skin. It is the scene of shipwrecks and battles. It is full of dead men's bones, and the floating wrack of Empires. It is a call of the blood, a tradition from the past. It is not an inhuman, an external thing. It is the antagonist and yet the friend, the enemy of life and yet to the brave the mother and lover of men. The painter may regard it as a mere phenomenon, the foreground of dawns, the mirror of noons. The musician, if he knows the limitations and the possibilities of his art, will see it rather as the most stupendous factor in the emotional life of mankind, the symbol of all its conflicts, the analogue of its perpetual warfare with a fluctuating, yet indomitable world. He will hear, in short, what Sophocles long ago

heard on the Ægean, when it brought into his mind "the turbid ebb and flow of human misery."

IV.

OF FAUNS AND OBOES.

THE London Symphony Orchestra gave yesterday a performance of Debussy's whimsical sketch, "The Afternoon of a Faun." It is a work which the critics have decided to admire, and the most resolute reactionary in music, the sturdiest enemy of the programme, must needs admit its cleverness. For all the ingenuity of its simple orchestration and the aptness of its themes, I confess that it comes near boring and offending me. That, however, is a personal impression, which is of interest to no one save myself. But this ambiguous tribute I will pay to Debussy — that he encourages my mind to wander while his faun is breathing voluptuous dreams into the oboes and the strings.

I found myself gazing in blank amazement at the row of decorous middle-class people in front of me who appeared to be listening with pleasure and edification. There were broad matronly backs, reverent bald heads, here and there a gaunt clerical neck, and in every line of head and shoulder one could decipher rectitude, propriety, and virtue.

Pillars of their churches, stern members of Charity Organisation Societies, teetotalers, models of thrift, self-discipline and self-help — one asked oneself in amazement what they were doing in that particular gallery. For, decadent and artificial as Debussy is, there is no mistaking his meaning, and for those whose imagination is defective there is, after all, the programme. The programme is bald, uncompromising, literal. The faun with whom Debussy invites us to spend an afternoon was by no means a virtuous biped.

It is well to be precise, and the programme is precision itself:

> A faun rests in the heat of the day in the forest shade, and, turning his thoughts to nymphs and amorous delights, he imagines that he holds in his arms the Goddess of Love herself. But he breaks off from this thought, knowing that such presumption will bring dire punishment, and seeks forgetfulness in sleep.

There are two faun traditions in literature. There is the Pan who stands for the mystery of the woods and streams, and mocks the grave designs of man. He lies in wait on the mountain side for the Philistines who are counting the rich harvest of their fleeces,

or marching in all the solemnity of discipline to triumph and the battlefield. He sows fear in their hearts, turns their purposes to scorn, and vindicates the supremacy of the unchartered imagination. His pipe has its graver notes, and he vies even with Apollo. Shelley has set forth his swelling repertoire:

> I sang of the dancing stars,
> I sang of the daedal earth,
> And of heaven and the giant wars,
> And love and death and birth.

But there were no such stops as these in the pipe of Debussy's faun. He was the mere animal faun, a biped without a soul, an intelligence without a future, a primitive furry thing, whose passions were those of a squirrel or a sparrow.

From the first statement of the grotesque faun theme to the sleepy close, the music is wholly sensuous, animal, voluptuous. The naughty sounds went floating about the broadcloth of the clergyman in front of me, and I found myself wondering what Tolstoy would have said about it all. He found the Kreutzer Sonata immoral — why, I have never been able to understand. He was shocked because Wagner's heroes in the

"Ring" come upon the stage with bare elbows and naked knees. What fire of denunciation and anger would he not have expended upon this little decadent trifle of Debussy's!

The clergymen applauded rapturously, and I saw the great peasant shape of Tolstoy rising in front of them, menacing, angry, condemnatory. He growled out his pessimism in the bassoons and fagottoes of Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony, and I heard him lamenting, through that tremendous outburst of Slavonic gloom, against the animal gaiety of the French decadent.

The concert was over, and I was wandering, half-troubled and half-amused, among the greenery of St. James's Park. Debussy's faun went dancing through its artificial shades, his hoof-prints lightly touching the sward where Charles II and his Court used to celebrate their *fêtes champêtres*. I made a gallant Watteau background for him among the water and the trees, but still there came in pursuit the angry Slavonic peasant in his great beard and work-stained blouse, and the faun theme alternated in my brain with the mournful notes of the symphony. At

last, perforce, I had to argue it out with Tolstoy.

"Reverend sir," said I, diffident and stammering, "you forget that a faun is not a real existence. Those are literary passions, that he feels, fictitious amours. His sins are a mere artifice. They do not stir the pulse or heat the blood. It is all play and folly from the beginning to the end."

The old man was angrier than ever.

"Either those programme themes mean nothing at all, or they mean desire, voluptuousness, the revolt of the flesh, the superfluous naughtiness of a corrupt and luxurious society. If they mean anything at all to you and your clergymen, they must mean the indulgence of moods and desires, which you would be ashamed to avow."

I fled abashed into the refuge of the Horse Guards quadrangle. But away from the angry old man, a sort of answer came to me. I remembered how cold the orchestration had been. There are instruments which express passion warmly and softly. Debussy had not used these. He had somehow sterilised his voluptuous phrases and made of them mere ghosts and echoes

of desire. The dominant instrument was the oboe. Metaphorically I snatched the oboe and hurled it at Tolstoy.

"Angry, tempestuous old man, tell me, if you will, what real passion, what actual human sin was ever breathed through the cold, virginal wood of an oboe. One may do murders with a trumpet, one may break the whole decalogue on a violin, but the oboe is something less than human. It is the instrument of Dresden shepherdesses, as cold and sinless as painted china."

There remains to be written a whole chapter in the æsthetics of music, and I would call it the chapter of the oboe. The physiological school may try as it will to reduce the theory of expression to terms which connect certain sequences, certain rhythms with the reflex physical processes which express the primitive emotions. But there remains, when all is said, a vast field which belongs to mere fortuitous association.

The oboe has been from all time the pastoral instrument. It cannot dominate the orchestra without at once altering the plane of reality. It carries us at once to Sicily, or if you will to Dresden. It intro-

duces, into the world of mere absolute sound, a suggestion which is historical and literary. It sets us thinking in terms of Theocritus and Virgil. It makes of what otherwise might be sheer straightforward human emotion a literary convention, a deliberate artifice. "The Faun's Afternoon," thanks to the oboe, is as remote from reality and passion as the "Rape of the Lock" itself.

At that moment two guardsmen rode by, gay anachronisms, useless phantoms, glittering and resplendent in their brass helmets and scarlet tunics. I beckoned to Tolstoy.

"See there," said I, "will you say that those guardsmen express bloody-mindedness and brutality?"

A German student dressed in the businesslike uniform of the duel, with a leather apron in front of him, is vastly more typical of brutality than these archaic figures. Even khaki is ten times more horrible. The human mind has devised conventions which can rob the passions of their grossness and reality. Desire on the furry legs of a faun grows innocent; brutality in a breastplate is almost gentle.

The Bibelot

IF there was one thing dear to Edmund Clarence Stedman it was that he might be able to finish the translation of Theocritus on which his soul was set. This was said to Mr. W. D. Howells as long ago as 1866. At that time it was known he had in view a complete version of the three Sicilian Idylists of which fragments alone exist, none having received the revision intended and, as a consequence, none, with the exceptions presently to be noted, destined to find their way into print. What we now offer are four Idyls of Theocritus; two, Thyrsis *and* The Honey-comb Thief, *taken from manuscript sources by the permission of Miss Laura Stedman, the poet's granddaughter. The translation of Moschus'* Epitaph of Bion *is also from the same unpublished manuscript book. It is true that Stedman requested the destruction of this volume, but Miss Stedman could not bring herself to what would seem an act of vandalism. "The* Æneid *Virgil wished burned because it was not filed smooth to his liking" recalls a noble precedent, while the translation of* Faust *which Coleridge*

offered to undertake if Murray would advance one hundred guineas is another illustration of the untoward happenings in literary history.[1]

Those familiar with the Life and Letters[2] *will recall the chapter* (XIII) *con-*

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[1] *Our loss is perhaps partially made up in what Stedman accomplished as a critic and poet. His two great and successful books in their latest revision,* Poets of America, *1885, and* Victorian Poets, *1887, with the complementary volumes—*A Victorian Anthology, *1895, and* An American Anthology, *1900,* The Nature and Elements of Poetry, *1892, as well as the* The Complete Poems, *1908, remain in evidence that he was not wholly delivered over to the Philistines and foolish folk of his day. No one who reads, for example, the chapter on Tennyson or that other chapter wherein Whitman is accorded the justice denied him in almost every other quarter, or who turns to the edition of Poe, edited in conjunction with Professor Woodberry, but will find him at an altitude not excelled or even equalled by any later American or English critic. Thus, when all is said, Stedman must be reckoned with for many a year to come. If, as poet, his work bears some of the marks of haste and of "timeliness" there are indications as well of something other than merely "occasional verse" in lyrics still aflame with the divine fire and a still more divine pathos, seen in* The Undiscovered Country *and* The Discoverer,—*lyrical utterances well-nigh perfect.*

[2] Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman. *By Laura Stedman and George M. Gould, M. D. Octavo. 2 vols. New York, 1910.*

cerning the American poet's love of the Greek singer of field and fold.[1] *The two Idyls published, the second and thirteenth, brought Stedman at the time "wide and great praise," but "immediate necessity . . . never permitted him the freedom needed to polish his work as he wished." It was this lack of leisure that caused him, as Miss Stedman writes, to ask that she "burn the precious manuscript which he had prepared so many years before in the early 60's, later working at it as he might." In a letter dated March 4th, 1897, Stedman wrote: "To make a complete metrical version of Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, has been the Flying Dutchman of my life. Encouraged by Mr. Lowell, I undertook it thirty years ago, made a comparative revision of the original texts and a complete prose translation with elaborate notes; also rendered various idyls into English hexameter; but then had to lay the whole thing by and earn my bread and butter. I consoled myself*

1 *See* Theocritus in English Literature *by Robert Thomas Kerlin, A. M., Ph. D. (Yale). Octavo. Wrappers. Pp. xii: 1-204. Lynchburg, Va., 1910. This is a book that should fill a long felt want on the part of all who care for Theocritus. It can be ordered direct of the author. Professor Kerlin's appreciation of E. C. S. is all the more welcome coming as a belated but beautiful echo from Stedman's beloved* Alma Mater.

with the reflection that the work I had done was not wholly thrown away. It had given me a lot of scholarly training and discipline. Again, one perhaps had better devote himself to original work while still in his prime, and resort to translation, as did Bryant and Longfellow, in the leisure of his closing years. My closing years have come, but I am poor and overworked. I have saved all the MSS. *of my translation, and some miracle may yet enable me to complete it. If I do so, I shall not forget that there is one publisher who is so much of a scholar and book-lover as to be willing to publish it.*"

Once more to cite from Miss Stedman: "*This was the one act I could not bring myself to carry out. . . Some months ago . . . I came upon three of the Idyls. They bore a note, written shortly before his death, saying that though 'faulty enough' these three might be used. Then I was glad I had not yet burned the book.*" *These three which include the* Epitaph of Bion *and the two from* Theocritus *already printed we now lay before our readers.*

How long this expectation lingered with Stedman is seen by his many recorded utterances in letters to his friends, J. R. Lowell,

Col. Higginson, R. H. Stoddard, and Bayard Taylor — a life dream not destined to find completion. When one ponders this long and busy career it is with vain regret so much was wasted on people who, whatever their appreciation of him, did not sufficiently consider the fact that the time he took to give their third-rate productions the benefit of his first-rate critical mind, with the still greater benefit of his friendly aid, was so much stolen from what he justly owed to himself alone and to his intellectual development. There is something about Stedman's lack of occasion akin to that of George Gissing. It is quite possible Gissing without regard to his classical attainment accomplished in English fiction what will endure even if the hope as expressed at the conlusion of By the Ionian Sea *was never realized: "As I looked my last . . . I wished it were mine to wander endlessly amid the silence of the ancient world, to-day and all its sounds forgotten."*

Writers like John Addington Symonds have passed through as much storm and stress, but Symonds unlike Stedman was more luckily endowed with a private fortune. Neither of these men wholly attained the thing most dear and desirable, but of the two the American was in many respects

the happier man,— the happiest if only the wished-for chance had come, with the opportunity of living long enough to know his name was forever linked with the Syracusan in that perfected hexameter version of the Idyls, *which as yet though not unsought by others, is sought and still unseen by us.*

"Those golden lines,
Rich in the fragrance of o'erwhelming love;
The passionate sweetness of the tuberose bells,
Sweetness that song refines
Till earth-born passion spreads her wings above."

FOR JUNE-JULY:
TWO PLAYS
BY J. M. SYNGE.

IV TRANSLATIONS FROM THEOCRITUS:

I	THYRSIS,	(ID. I)
II	THE REAPERS,	(ID. X)
III	HYLAS,	(ID. XIII)
IV	THE HONEY-COMB THIEF,	(ID. XIX)

MOSCHUS:

EPITAPH OF BION, (ID. III)

Done into English by

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

Ye shades of Syracusan shepherds, weep
For him who loved you. To that land of dreams,
Where Lacon entertains with rustic themes
A rustic muse on some Sicilian steep,
He shall return no more. He lies asleep:
Nor may Menalcas whistling to his teams,
Nor Battus piping by the haunted streams,
Ever arouse him from his slumber deep.
"I too am in Arcadia," even Death,
Who, while Comatas runs his lips along
The reeds of Syrinx, modulates the stops
With icy fingers till the shepherd's breath
Falters, the praise of Pan is hushed, the song
Floats to a sigh among the mountain-tops.

JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY.

THE spacious cities hummed with toil;
The monarch reared his towers to the skies;
Men delved the fruitful soil
And studied to be wise.
Along the highway's rocky coil
The mailéd legions rang;
Smiling unheeded mid the moil
The Poet sang.

The glittering cities long are heaps;
The starry towers lie level with the plain;
The desert serpent sleeps
Where soared the marble fane.
The stealthy, bead-eyed lizard creeps
Where gleamed the Tyrant's throne;
That grandeur dark oblivion steeps,
The song sings on.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

IV TRANSLATIONS FROM THEOCRITUS.

I.

THYRSIS.

THE SHEPHERD THYRSIS. A GOATHERD.

THYRSIS.

SWEET is the whispering sound of the pine, which, there by the fountain,
Goatherd, tunefully sighs, and sweet is the strain thou art piping:
Second to Pan alone thou art in the prize thou shalt win thee.
Thine shalt the she-goat be, if Pan hath taken the horn'd one;
If he hath won him the mother, her kidling falls to thy portion:
Rare good meat is the flesh of the yearling-kid, till thou milk her.

GOATHERD.

Sweeter, O shepherd, thy music, than yon melodious water
Falling adown, adown, from the upper cliff. For thy tribute,

If, perchance, the Muses shall take the ewe as their guerdon,
Thou shalt receive the stall-fed lamb; but if it content them,
Haply, to gain the lamb, the ewe is thine own thereafter.

THYRSIS.

Wilt thou, goatherd, nay, — by the Nymphs! I say, — art thou willing,
Here on this hill-side glade, where the tamarisks are, to be seated,
Playing the pipe? And I, meanwhile, will care for thy she-goats.

GOATHERD.

Shepherd, it is not right, it is not right that we herdsmen
Play on the pipe at noonday: — 't is Pan we fear; for at this time,
Tired with hunting, he rests; and he 's of a cross-grained nature,
Ay, and a cutting anger sits on his nostril! However,
Thyrsis, — for thou wast wont to sing the sorrows of Daphnis,
And to the higher walk hast reached of pastoral music, —

Come, let us seat us fronting the Fountain-Nymphs and Priapus,
Under the elm, where yonder rustic bench and the oaks are.
And if, haply, thou singest as when thou sangest contending,
Erst, with the Libyan, Chromis, I first will give thee a she-goat,
Mother of twins, — and thrice, albeit thou milkest her daily,
She, though twain her kids, can fill two bowls at a milking,—
Also, an ivy goblet, a deep one, polished with sweet wax,
Two-eared, newly wrought, that still doth smack o' the chisel;
Ivy about the lips is verily clambering over,
Ivy with helichrys sprinkled; around this wanders the helix,
Glorying therewithal in the golden fruit. And a woman,
Rare device of the Gods! within the rim has been graven,
Decked with a fillet — yes, and a flowing robe; and beside her,
Men, that have fair long locks, are, each in turn from his own side,
Wrangling with words: but their speeches fail to cozen her fancy;

Now to the one, forsooth, she seems to look and be smiling,
Now on the other, anon, she casts her thought. And a brave while,
Love-lorn, straining their eyes, they have their pains for their labor.
Next to these, moreover, an ancient fisher is carven,
Also a rugged rock,—across which presses the old man,
Dragging a mighty net, like a fellow striving his utmost.
Thou wouldst declare he was fishing with all the strength of his body,
Everywhere round his neck the chords so fiercely are swelling,
Though he be hoar with age; for his powers are worthy his spring-time.
No great space from the wave-worn veteran, mark you, a vineyard
Seems with red-ripe clusters in beautiful wise to be laden;
This, while he sits at the thorn-hedge, a certain youngster is guarding;
Nevertheless, two foxes are prowling about him:—the first runs
Swiftly along the rows, despoiling the vintage; the other,
Gathering all his craft to rob the pouch of the urchin,
Vows that he 'll leave him not till he 's brought him to crumbs for breakfast.

He, meanwhile, is weaving a masterly trap for the locusts,
Fitting the asphodel-stalks to a rush; nor cares for the wallet,
Nor for the fruit, so much as he takes delight in his braid-work.
Wholly around the beaker there spreads the pliant acanthus,
Quite an Æolian sight: the marvel it is would amaze you!
For it I bartered a goat to the Calydonian sailor,
Also a white-milk cheese, a great one; nor has it ever
Met my lip to this hour, but is still untouched where I laid it.
Even of this gift, too, would I make thee glad, with a free heart,
Comrade, if thou to me wouldst sing that hymn which I long for.
Nay, but I mean it, friend! Come on! Thou shalt not for ever
Hoard thy song, till in Hades thou canst recall it no longer.

THYRSIS (*sings*).

Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

I am Thyrsis from Ætna, and this is the voice of Thyrsis.

Where were ye then, O Nymphs, where then, when
Daphnis was pining?
Were ye in beautiful vales of Penëus, or haply of
Pindus?
Surely the mighty stream of river Anápus ye did not
Haunt, nor Ætna's peak, nor the sacred water of Acis.
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Him the jackals, ay, and him the wolves were
bewailing;
Him, as he died, the lion bemoaned aloud from the
thicket.
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Many the cows at his feet, and many the bulls, and,
moreover,
Many the calves and heifers that made a sorrowful
wailing.
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Came from the mountain Hermes, first, and said to
him: "Daphnis,
Who is bewitching thee? Friend, of whom art thou
so much enamoured?"
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Came the herdsmen, the shepherds, the goatherds came, and were asking,
All, what ailment he bore. Priápus came, and bespoke him:
"Daphnis, my poor, poor lad, why pinest thou? For the maiden
Past all fountains, all groves, is likewise borne by her footsteps.
(*Now dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland,*)

"Seeking thee out — thou laggard in love and utterly helpless!
Herdsman, forsooth, thou wast called, but now resemblest a goat-hind!
He, when he sees the bleating she-goats yield to their lovers,
Languishes with his eyes, at sight of a joy that 's denied him:
(*Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland,*)

"So, when thou seest the virgins, thou also, hearing their laughter,
Languishest with thine eyes, because thou art not in their dances!"
— Nothing to all these words replied the cowherd, but ever

Hoarded his bitter love, to the end which Fate had appointed.

Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Ah, then sweetly indeed came also Cypris, a-smiling,
Came with a laugh on her lip, but deep in her heart there was anger:
"Daphnis," she said, "thou vowedst to bend the sinews of Erôs;
Art thou not bent thyself by Erôs, that resolute foeman?"

Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

Her, though, Daphnis answered in this wise: "Cypris, thou dread one!
Cypris, thou fury! Cypris, that still art hostile to mortals!
Art thou at length assured my sun hath its final setting?
Daphnis, even in Hades, shall be a torment to Erôs.

Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

"Go where the cowherd, 't is said, was fondled by Cypris — to Ida!
Creep to Anchises, for there are the oaks, — here only the marsh-grass.

Blooming Adonis, too — he pastures sheep, and, moreover,
Pierces the crouching hares and hunts all beasts of the forest.
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

"Mind thou standest again in front of Diomed, saying:
'Ho, come fight me now, for I conquer Daphnis, the herdsman!'
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

"O, ye wolves, ye jackals, ye cave-housed bears on the mountains,
O, farewell! No longer Daphnis, your cowherd, shall wander
Here by the woodland, the copses, the groves! Farewell, Arethusa,
Ay, and ye rivers that pour down Thymbris your beautiful water!
Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

"I am that Daphnis, who here am wont to pasture the cattle:

Daphnis, who here am wont to water the bulls and the heifers.

Now, dear Muses, begin ye, begin the song of the woodland.

"O Pan, Pan! if thou hauntest the long-drawn heights of Lycæus,
If thou art keeping great Mænalus, — to the Sicilian island
Come, from that lofty tomb which is dear to the Happy Immortals,
Hie thee from Hélicê's front and the grave of the son of Lycáôn.

Cease, belovéd Muses, O cease your song of the woodland.

"Hither, O King, and take this beautiful pipe, that so sweetly
Breathes of the moulded wax, and is curved to the lips of the player;
Take it, for I am dragged forthwith by Erôs to Hades!

Cease, belovéd Muses, O cease your song of the woodland.

"Violets now may ye bear, ye thorns, and bear them, ye thistles;
Now let the fair narcissus bloom on the juniper-bushes;
Hung be the pine with pears, and, now that Daphnis must perish,

All things, change from your wont! — the stag may
harry the deer-hound,
Ay, and the mountain-owls with nightingales vie in
their singing!"
*Cease, belovéd Muses, O cease your song of the
woodland.*

Such were the words he spake, and was silent; but
Aphroditê
Yearned to uplift him: alas! the threads of his life
were exhausted,
All, by the Fates; and Daphnis went with the stream;
and the eddy
Swirled him away who was dear alike to the Nymphs
and the Muses.
*Cease, belovéd Muses, O cease your song of the
woodland.*

(*Speaks.*)

Give me the she-goat now, and the cup; that, when I
have milked her,
I may pour out to the Muses. O hail ye, Muses, and
hail ye
Ever again! and hereafter I 'll sing to you even more
sweetly.

GOATHERD.

Full be thine exquisite mouth, O Thyrsis, of honey,
and be it

Full of the comb, and mayest thou sweet Ægilian
fruitage
Eat, for surely thou singest more tunefully than a
cicála.
Look, friend, here is thy cup; observe how fragrant
its odor!
Thou wilt believe it was dipped in the fountain-springs
of the Hours.
Ho, Cissætha, this way! And now do thou milk her.
— Ye kidlings,
Ware how ye frisk about, lest the buck should make
you repent it!

A portion of the Tenth and the whole of the Thirteenth Idyls of Theocritus are given in the [two] following translations. The text of "Hylas" is somewhat in dispute, and as the translator has examined various editions, his versions will be found to differ, in one or two places, from the common reading. He has also, with good authority, divided the alternate songs of "The Reapers" into the couplets, which so exactly balance each other, and which are approved by critical and poetical instinct. The English hexameter has been selected as the only measure adapted to a literal and a lineal rendering of the peculiar idyllic verse. These specimens of the Sicilian-Doric poetry, including a pastoral, and a semi-epic theme, are from a version of the works of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, which was begun many years ago, but has never been completed.

E. C. S.

For permission to make use of these two Idyls thanks are due The Houghton, Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers of all Mr. Stedman's works in prose and verse.—Ed. The Bibelot.

II.

THE REAPERS.

Milo and Battus.

MILO.

But come now, down with the harvest!
Strike up also, I pray, a sweetheart song of the maiden;
Thus will you work more lightly: — I think you used to be tuneful.

BATTUS (*sings*).

"Sing with me, O Pierian Muses, the lass that is lissome;
For ye make all things fair, whatever ye touch, ye Divine Ones!

"Graceful Bombýcê, they call you a Syrian, scrawny and sunburnt,—
All but me, who alone pronounce you the color of honey.

"Ay, and the violet's dark, and the hyacinth wearing its letters:
None the less, for all that, are they sorted first in the garlands.

"She-goats hunt for the clover, the wolf goes after
the she-goat,
After the plough the crane, — but I 've gone raving
for you, love!

"Would that mine were as much as Crœsus, they say,
was possessed of;
Then should we twain, in gold, be set up before
Aphrodite;

"You with a — yes, with a flute, and a rose, or, maybe,
an apple;
I, with new Amyclæan shoes, and a robe in the
fashion.

"Graceful Bombýcê, your feet are pretty as dice that
twinkle;
Soft is your voice; but your manner, — I have no
words to express it!"

MILO.

Look you, the lad has been sly, composing us elegant
ditties:
See how well he has measured the form of his even
rhythm!

O this beard of mine, which I seem to have grown to
no purpose!
But, to go on, now hear these words of the sage
Lytiersês:

(*Sings.*)

"O Dêmêter, abounding in fruit and ears of the harvest,
Well may this field be worked and yield a crop beyond measure!

"Hard, bind hard, ye binders, the sheaves, lest ever a passer
Say, 'These men are poor sticks, and their pay is cash out of pocket.'

"Toward the north-wind let your swath of grain in the cutting
Look, or else to the west, for thus the ear will grow fuller.

"Threshers, threshing the corn, should shun the slumbers of noonday;
That is the very hour when the chaff flies off from the wheat-stalk.

"Reapers, begin your toil when the tuft-lark soars from the meadow:
Cease when he sleeps: besides, in the heat of the day take your leisure.

"Give me a frog's life, boys! he needs, to pour out his tipple,
No cup-bearer, not he, for 't is up to his mouth all around him.

"Better to boil the lentil, you 'll find it, niggardly steward:
Ware lest you cut your hand in making two halves of a cummin."

(*Speaks.*)

Staves like these 't is fit that men at work in the sunshine
Troll; but, lad, 't were better to prate of your starveling passion
Unto your mother awake in her bed at break of the morning.

III.

HYLAS.

Not for ourselves alone the God, who fathered that stripling
Erôs, begat him, Nicias, as we have flattered us: neither
Unto ourselves the first have beauties seemed to be beauties,—
Not unto us, who are mortal and do not foresee the morrow;
But that heart of brass, Amphitryôn's son, who awaited
Stoutly the ruthless lion, he too was fond of a youth once—
Graceful Hylas, the lad with the curling locks,—and he taught him
All fair things, as a father would teach the child of his bosom,
All which himself had learned, and great and renowned in song grown;
Nor was he ever at all apart from him, neither at midday,
Nor when the white-horsed car of Eôs ran up to Zeusward,—
Nor when the twittering chickens looked to their nest, and the mother

Over her smoky perch at eve had fluttered her pinions,—
So might the lad be featly trained to his heart's own liking,
And, with himself for guide, grow up a genuine hero.
Now when it chanced that Jason, the son of Æson, went sailing
After the Golden Fleece, and with him followed the nobles,
Picked from all the towns and ripe for that service,— among them
Also to rich Iôlkos came the laboring hero,
He that was son of Alcmêne, — the heroine of Midea;
By his side went Hylas down to the bulwarked Argo,—
Which good ship the clashing Cyanean rocks in no wise
Touched, but clove as an eagle, — and so ran into deep Phasis,—
Clove through a mighty surge, whence low reefs jutted in those days.
So at the time when the Pleiads rise, — and out-of-way places
Pasture the youngling lamb, and Spring has turned,— the immortal
Flower of heroes began of their voyage then to be mindful,
And, having sat them down again in the hollow Argo,
Came to the Hellespont, a south wind blowing, the third day,

And within the Propontis their anchorage made,—
where oxen
Broaden Ciánian furrows afield, and brighten the
ploughshare.
There stepping out on the beach they got the meal of
the evening,
Two by two; and many were strewing a couch for
them all, since
Close at hand lay a meadow,—to furnish sedge for
the bedding:
Thence sharp flowering-rush and low galingale they
cut them.
And with a brazen ewer the fair-haired Hylas was
seeking
Water, for Héraklês' supper and sturdy Telamon's
also,—
Comrades twain, that ever were used to eat at one table.
Erelong, too, he spied a spring in a low-lying hollow:
Round its brim there grew a host of rushes, and dark-
blue
Celandine rose, and pale-green maiden-hair: and
parsley
Throve, and the witch-grass tangling wild through
watery places.
Now the Nymphs were starting a dance in the midst
of the fountain,—
Sleepless Nymphs, divine, to country people a terror,—
Malis, Euneica, and one with her look of the Spring,
Nycheia.

Soothly, the lad was holding the huge jar over the water,
Dipping in haste, when one and all grew fast to his hand there.
Love wound close around the gentle hearts of the bevy,
Love for the Argive boy: and headlong into the dark pool
Fell he, as when a fiery star has fallen from heaven
Headlong into the sea, and a sailor cries to his shipmates:
"Loosen the tackle, lads!—O, here comes a wind for sailing!"
As for the Nymphs, they held on their knees the tearful stripling,
And with their kindly words were fain to comfort his spirit.
But Amphitryôn's son, alarmed for the youth, bestirred him,
Taking Scythian-wise his bended bow and its arrows,
Also the club, which his right hand ever to hold was accustomed.
Thrice, ay, thrice he shouted HYLAS! loud as his deep throat
Could, while thrice the lad heard underneath, and a thin voice
Came from the wave, and O, so near he was, yet so distant!
And as a thick-maned lion, that hears a whimpering fawn cry

Far away, — some lion that munches flesh on the mountains, —
Speeds from his lair to a meal which surely waits for his coming,
So, through untrodden brambles, Héraklês, craving the dear youth,
Sped in tremor and scoured great reaches this way and that way.
Reckless are they who love! what ills he suffered while ranging
Cliffs and thickets! and light, beside this, seemed the quest of Jason.
Meanwhile the ship lay still, with her tackle hoisted above her,
And, — of those present, — the youth were clearing the sails at midnight,
Waiting for Héraklês: he, wherever his feet might lead him,
Wild went on, for a cruel god was tearing his heart-strings.
Fairest Hylas is numbered thus with the Happy Immortals:
Nathless the heroes were scoffing at Héraklês as a deserter,
Since he had fled from the ship of the thirty benches, from Argo.
Onward he trudged afoot to Colchis and welcomeless Phasis.

IV.

THE HONEYCOMB-THIEF.

ONCE a vengeful honey-bee stung the pilferer, Erôs,
Filching a comb from the hives, and all the tips of his fingers
Pierced; but he felt the pang, and smote on the ground beneath him
Blew his hands, and danced; and scolded to Aphroditê,
Shewing his hurt, because the bee, that is but a wee thing,
Makes such wonderful wounds. And merrily answered the mother:
What, and thou thyself, art thou not bad as the bees are?
Thou wast always a wee thing — and wonderful wounds thou makest!

EPITAPH OF BION.

MOURNFULLY answer my groan, dark vales and Dorian water,
And with me, ye rivers, lament for our darling — for Bion!
Drop with tears, ye plants, and moan, ye groves of the woodland:
Flowers, O now breathe out your lives in sorrowful clusters.
Roses, blush with grief, and pale anemonies redden!
Hyacinth, babble thy letters, and plainer within thy petals
Wear the *alas! alas!* — A beautiful singer has perished!

Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Utter it, nightingales, in tangled leafage bewailing,
Say to the full Sicilian fountains of Arethusa,
Bion, the herdsman, is dead! and say that melody with him,
Aye, and the Doric strain, are hushed in silence for ever.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Weep, ye swans of Strymôn, beside the waters forlornly,
And with piteous voices a sorrowful madrigal warble,
Such as his voice was wont to sing in your rites of mourning.
Tell Æagrian maidens and nymphs of Bistonian valleys,
Once more tell them all: *He is gone, the Dorian Orpheus!*
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

He that was dear to the herds no longer sings, and no longer
Carols, reclining beneath the lonely shade of the oak-trees,
But in Pluto's hall a Lethêan melody murmurs.
Mute are the hills henceforth, and ever the heifers bemoan him,
Roaming astray with the bulls, nor care to eat of the herbage.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Even Apollo bewept thy swift fate, Bion, and Satyrs
Mingled their sobs with those of the sable-vestured Priapi;
Pans are sighing to hear thy minstrelsy, while through the copses
Nymphs of the springs bewailed, and their tears descended in waters.

Echo, also, amid the rocks, deplores that in silence
Now no more thy lips can she mimic; and at thy dying
Trees have dropped their fruit, and all the flowers have withered;
Nor from the ewes has fair milk flowed, — nor trickles the honey
Still from hives but, grieved, has died in the wax: for it boots not,
Since thy honey has wasted, to gather the sweets of the clover.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Never so much by the bordering coasts lamented the dolphin,
Never so much on the rocks the nightingale sang, nor so sadly
Plained the swallow ever along the uplands, nor Ceyx
Over Alcyone's pains made ever such piteous clamor,
Never so much the cerylus sang in the live-green billows,
Neither so much in eastern vales did the bird of Memnôn,
Fluttering round the mound of the son of Eôs, bemoan him,
As they have wailed for Bion — our Bion departed for ever!
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Nightingales, grieving with all the swallows, — whom once he delighted,
Whom he was teaching to babble, — now perched on the opposite branches
Cried to each other in woe: and birds of the forest responded,—
Grieve, ye bereaved, and we — we also have part in your mourning!
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Who henceforth shall sing to thy pipe, O thrice-desired?
Who shall put mouth to thy reeds? Who so bold? for thy inspiration
Even yet they breathe, and thy lips which filled them with music,
And in the rushes Echo is still devouring thy numbers.
Say, shall I bear to Pan the flute? perhaps to awake it
Even he would not dare, lest his prize to thine should be second.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

She, too, weeps for thy lay, — Galatea, whom once thou delightedst
When by thy side she sat along the shores of the ocean.
Not like Cyclops sangst thou: him the fair Galatea
Used to flee, forsooth, but thee more sweetly regarded,

Oft, than the sea, and now, in the wearisome, sandy, stretches
Sits forgetting the wave, and still she pastures thy oxen.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

With thee, herdsman, utterly perished the gifts of the Muses
Virginal kisses enchanting, the lips of the youths that caressed us;
All around thy tomb the sorrowful Loves are weeping.
More, far more than her dearest kiss doth Cypris adore thee,
More than the kiss with which she clung to dying Adonis.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

This is thy second pang, Melês, thou tunefullest river:
This is a new distress. Calliope's mouth of sweetness,
Homer, left thee first, and thine illustrious offspring
Thou didst weep, they say, didst weep with passionate streamlets,
Sending thy voice throughout the length and breadth of the ocean;
Now thou sobbest anew, and another son art deploring.
Both were dear to the springs: and of the Pegásean fountain
One indeed would quaff, and the other of Arethusa.
That one verily sang of Tyndarus' beautiful daughter,

Thetis's mighty son, and Menelaos Atreides;
Not of wars, nor of tears, but of Pan would the other
be chanting,
And would discourse of herdsmen and, singing, would
pasture the cattle;
Shepherds'-pipes would he fashion, and milk the love-
able heifer,
Aye, and would teach the kisses of youths, — and deep
in his bosom
Nourish Erôs and wake the passion of Aphroditê.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

All the towns lament thee, Bion, — each illustrious
city.
Ascra, indeed, for thee far more than for Hesiod
sorrows;
Not so much for Pindar yearn the Bœotian woodlands;
Pleasant Lesbos never so much wept over Alcæus:
Nor hath the Teian town shed tears so much for her
minstrel.
More than Archilochus thee now Paros mourns; and
as sadly
Mytilene repeats even yet thy song and not Sappho's.
All the makers of pastorals, all to whom from the
Muses
Comes a melodious voice, bewail aloud thy departure:
Weeps the glory of Samos, Sicelidas; while now
lamenting

He of Cydonians erst with his glad eye joyous to
gaze on,
Lycidas, pours forth tears; and mourns amid folk
Triopæan,
There on the banks of Hales, Philetas; Theocritus
also
Grieves in his own Syracuse; but I, moreover, now
sing thee
Strains of Ansonian woe, — myself to the art not
unwonted,
But of the Dorian Muse, the bucolic, which thou to
thy scholars
Taught betimes, an heir: thy riches only, to others
Thou didst leave, but me with the gift of thy min-
strelsy honored!
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Even the mallows, — alas! alas! — when once in the
garden
They, or the pale-green parsley and crisp growing
anise, have perished,
Afterwards they will live and flourish again at their
season;
We, the great and brave, — or the wise, — when death
has benumbed us,
Deaf in the hollow ground a silent, infinite slumber
Sleep: for ever we lie in the trance that knoweth no
waking.

Verily thou no less shalt be sepulchred also in silence,
While it has pleased the nymphs that the croak of the frog shall be ceaseless.
Him, though, would I not envy: for no sweet music he utters.
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Poison came to thy mouth: thou knewest poison, my Bion!
How, O how could it meet thy lips, nor change to their sweetness?
Who, while thou didst speak, so barbarous as to commingle
Poison, and pass to thee, nor flee the spell of thy numbers?
Now, Sicilian Muses, begin the song of your sorrow.

Justice o'erreaches all. And I, in tears at this anguish,
Also bewail thy fate. And knew I the byway they followed,
Downward to Tartarus groping, — Orpheus, and once Odysseus,
And Alcides erst, — I also haply would seek for
Pluto's mansion, that I might chance again to behold thee
And, if thou singest to Pluto, might hear thy lay. But to Cora
Something Sicilian warble and some sweet song of the meadows.

She is Sicilian also, and played in the valleys Ætnæan,
Aye, and the Dorian melody knew; and therefore unhonored
Shall not be thy strain, but, as before thee to Orpheus
Sweetly touching his lyre she gave Eurydice ransomed,
Bion, thee no less will she send to thy hills. And would Pluto
Yield anything to my piping, I also would sing to regain thee.

The Bibelot

As The Bibelot *aims to restore somewhat of "the years that the locust hath eaten," no better thing can be found than an essay in* The Yellow Book *for 1895, entitled* Mr. Stevenson's Forerunner *by James Ashcroft Noble. This "Forerunner" has already been referred to in our Foreword to* Alexander Smith: An Essay by James Smetham. (*The Bibelot, Vol.* XV, *Nov., 1909.*) *Later on we shall complete our task with examples of what the actual Smith is seen to be when taken at his best.*

Meanwhile is it not well to consider what James Ashcroft Noble was as a reviewer? His death in April, 1896, left few books to his credit, while a large body of neglected work is still "buried in the most ephemeral of all kinds of publications." The appreciation chosen by us is one that would have naturally found an abiding place in a book similar to The Sonnet in England and Other Essays, (*1893*), *and* Impressions and Memories, (*1895*); *volumes which had a favorable reception from reviewers and yet both, regrettably, to use booksellers'*

parlance "out of print." I have always felt the charm of Ashcroft Noble's criticism and personally I like to record the indebtedness contracted so long ago as 1898 when in the first reprint ever made of The Germ *I used what is still seen to be the most carefully thought-out article in the entire book. This was the essay on* A Pre-Raphaelite Magazine *originally printed in* Fraser's *in 1882. It compares more than favorably with the W. M. Rossetti Introduction prefixed to the* Facsimile Germ (*1901*), *which I did not publish but imported,—a difference not always observed in America. It should also be said that Ashcroft Noble had none of the* fin de siècle flair *which has come to be ascribed to* The Yellow Book *and its contributors. Indeed, this much abused magazine has far more literary merit than anything else published in England at that period and, in our belief, scarcely anything since can for a moment be compared with the band of authors many of whom, Henry Harland, editor and chief of all, have "gone where neither pain nor grief can now distress them."*

Noble's earliest book, Pelican's Papers, (*1875*), *a pamphlet on* Morality in English

Fiction, (*1887*), *and in the same year a small book of* Verses of a Prose Writer, *with the two later volumes above mentioned are the sole remaining outcrop of his heroic, suffering life. Along with Gleason White he is one of those we would fain remember. There is that something in both these men which remains unspoiled by "the decadentism of the early nineties." Our essayist may have viewed literature through a middle-aged atmosphere — it may even be that his preference for Alexander Smith is entirely old-fashioned, and yet, perhaps, it is all the more worth while not to swell the great chorus of mediocrity which cannot see anything in the earlier Scotchman, and who believe that the final compelling word has been uttered by our beloved "R. L. S." Both were on the heavenly road, ("we are all going to heaven," as Morris once said on a memorable occasion,) and in taking the side of the earlier man of genius Noble was neither unacquainted nor indifferent to the felicities of style revealed in* Virginibus Puerisque *or the love of mankind set forth in* The Christmas Sermon. *The books of our friend as we have said are "out of print." Even "to be occasionally quoted" as Smith desired is becoming sorrowfully infrequent. Why not see to it that our*

appreciation of quiet beauty is quickened and that for Alexander Smith and James Ashcroft Noble the rest is not *silence!*

MR. STEVENSON'S FORERUNNER:
AN ESSAY
By
JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

MR. STEVENSON'S FORERUNNER.

FOR a long time — I can hardly give a number to its years — I have been haunted by a spectre of duty. Of late the visitations of the haunter have recurred with increasing frequency and added persistence of appeal; and though, like Hamlet, I have long dallied with the ghostly behest, like him I am at last compelled to obedience. Ghosts, I believe, have a habit of putting themselves in evidence for the purpose of demanding justice, and my ghost makes no display of originality: in this respect he follows the time-honoured example of his tribe, and if peace of mind is to return to me the exorcism of compliance must needs be uttered.

Emerson in one of his gnomic couplets proclaims his conviction that

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> This heedful world hath never lost" —

a saying which, shorn of its imaginative wings and turned into a pedestrian colloquialism, reads something like this — "What deserves to live the world will not let die." It is a comforting belief, yet there are times when Tennyson's vision of the "fifty seeds,"

out of which Nature "often brings but one to bear," seems nearer to the common truth of things; and all the world's heedfulness will not exclude Oblivion with her poppies from some spot which should have been sacred to Fame with her amaranth and asphodel. Still there will always be those who will stretch out a hand to repel or evict the intruder — even as in Mr. Watts's noble allegory Love would bar the door against Death — and I would fain play my little part in one not inglorious eviction.

I want to write of a wholly-forgotten prose-man (forgotten, that is, by all save a solitary enthusiast here and there), but I must first speak of a half-forgotten singer. Only people who are on the shady side of middle-age can remember the intense enthusiasm excited by the first work of the young Glasgow poet, Alexander Smith. He had been discovered by that mighty hunter of new poets, the Rev. George Gilfillan; and in the columns of Mr. Gilfillan's journal *The Critic* had been published a number of verses which whetted the appetite of connoisseurs in the early fifties for the maiden volume of a bard who, it was broadly hinted, might be

expected to cast Keats into shadow. The prediction was a daring one; but the fifties, like the nineties, were a hey-day of new reputations; and when that brilliant though somewhat amorphous work, *A Life Drama*, saw the light, a good many people, not wholly indiscriminating, were more than half inclined to think that it had been fulfilled. The performance of the new poet, taken as a whole, might be emotionally crude and intellectually ineffective, but its affluence in the matter of striking imagery was amazing, and the critical literature of the day was peppered with quotations of Alexander Smith's "fine passages." Very few people open *A Life Drama* now, though much time is spent over books that are a great deal poorer; but if any reader, curious to know what kind of thing roused the admiration of connoisseurs in the years 1853–4, will spend an hour over the volume, he will come to the conclusion that it is a very remarkable specimen of what may be called the decorated style of poetic architecture.

"An opulent soul
Dropt in my path like a great cup of gold,
All rich and rough with stories of the gods."

"The sun is dying like a cloven king
In his own blood; the while the distant moon,
Like a pale prophetess that he has wronged,
Leans eager forward with most hungry eyes
Watching him bleed to death, and, as he faints,
She brightens and dilates; revenge complete
She walks in lonely triumph through the night."

"My drooping sails
Flap idly 'gainst the mast of my intent;
I rot upon the waters when my prow
Should grate the golden isles."

"The bridegroom sea
Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
And, in the fulness of his marriage joy,
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space to see how fair she looks,
Then, proud, runs up to kiss her."

These and such things as these were what the admiring critics loved to quote, and that they were indeed "fine passages" could not be denied even by people whose tastes were for something a little less gaudy. What was denied by those who were able to preserve some calmness of judgment amid the storm of enthusiasm was that this kind of fineness was the kind that goes to the making of great poetry. The special fine things were ingenious, striking, and sometimes beautiful conceits; they were notable

tours de force of poetic fancy; but they bore little if any witness to that illuminating revealing imagination of which great poetry is all compact. The young writer's images were happy discoveries of external and accidental resemblances; not revelations of inherent and interpretative affinity. Howsoever graceful and pretty in its way were the figure which likened the sea and the shore to a bridegroom and his bride, it gave no new insight into the daily mystery of the swelling and ebbing tide — no such hint of a fine correspondence between the things of sense and of spirit as is given in the really imaginative utterance of Whitman:

> "Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,
> As the water follows the moon silently with fluid steps anywhere around the globe."

What was most characteristic therefore in the verse of Alexander Smith was a winning or arresting quality of fancy; and, in poetry, fancy, though not to be despised, exercises a subordinate sway — "she is the second, not the first." It may be that Smith came to see this: it is more probable that he came to feel it, as a man feels many

things which he does not formulate in a clearly outlined thought: at any rate, after the publication of *Edwin of Deira*, his third volume of verse, he ceased almost entirely from song, and chose as his favourite vehicle of expression a literary form in which his special gift counted for more, and carried greater weight of value, than it could ever count or carry in the poems by which he first caught the world's ear.

And yet, curiously enough, while Smith's reputation as a poet still lingers in a faint after-glow, the essays in which he expressed himself with so much more of adequacy and charm cannot be said to have won fame at all. They have had from the first their little circle of ardent admirers, but it has never widened; its circumference has never touched, never even approximated to, the circumference of that larger circle which includes all lovers of letters. To be unacquainted with Lamb or Hunt, Hazlitt or De Quincey, would be recognised as a regrettable limitation of any man's knowledge of English literature: non-acquaintance with Alexander Smith as a writer of prose is felt to be one of those necessary ignorances that

can hardly be lamented because they are rendered inevitable by the shortness of life and the multiplicity of contending appeals. The fact that Smith as a poet achieved little more than a *succès d'estime* may have prejudiced his reputation as an essayist; but whatever theory be constructed to account for it, recent literary history presents no more curious instance of utter refusal to really admirable work of deserved recognition and far-reaching fame.

For it must be noted and insisted upon that the essays of Alexander Smith are no mere caviare literature. They have neither the matter nor the manner of coterie performance — the kind of performance which appeals to an acquired sense, and gives to its admirer a certain pleasing consciousness of aloofness from the herd. He is in the true line of descent from the great predecessors just named; and as they were his lineal forerunners, so are Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Richard Le Gallienne his lineal descendants. Indeed the name of Mr. Stevenson suggests, or rather re-suggests, a thought which is more or less familiar to most of us — that in the world of letters

there are seasons uncongenial to certain growths of fame which in another spring and autumn might have blossomed and borne much fruit. Only by some such consideration is it possible to account for the curious fact that while *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Men and Books* found their audience at once, *Dreamthorp* and *Last Leaves* are still so largely unknown, and can now only be procured by diligent search of the catalogues of the second-hand booksellers. The fact is all the more curious because Alexander Smith may be roughly described as a Stevenson born out of due time. Roughly, of course, for the individuality of thinking and utterance which is so important in all pure literature is, in the essay, not only important but essential — the one thing needful, apart from which all other things are, comparatively speaking, of no account; and in both Smith's work and Mr. Stevenson's the note of personality always rings clear and true.

Their essays are what the essay in its purest form always tends to be — the prose analogue of the song of self-expression, with its explicit or implicit autobiography, that touches us as we are never touched by

external splendours of epic or drama. In Montaigne, the father of the essay, the personal confession has an almost boyish incontinence of frankness: in Smith, as in all the modern men, it has more of reticence and reserve, but it is there all the time; and even when the thought seems most abstract and impersonal the manner of its utterance has not the coldness of disquisition, but the warmth of colloquy. We learn something of the secret of this quality of the work from a few sentences in which Smith discourses of his favourite craft and of his fellowcraftsmen. Just as two or three of our best sonneteers — Wordsworth and Rossetti to wit — have written admirable sonnets in celebration of the sonnet, so Alexander Smith is seldom seen to greater advantage than in the pages where he magnifies his office and makes himself the essayist of the essay.

"The essay, as a literary form, resembles the lyric, in so far as it is moulded by some central mood — whimsical, serious, or satirical. Give the mood, and the essay, from the first sentence to the last, grows around it as the cocoon grows around the silkworm. . . The essayist is a kind of poet in prose, and if harshly questioned as to his uses, he might be unable to render

a better apology for his existence than a flower might. The essay should be pure literature, as the poem is pure literature. The essayist wears a lance, but he cares more for the sharpness of its point than for the pennon that flutters upon it, than for the banner of the captain under whom he serves. He plays with death as Hamlet played with Yorick's skull, and he reads the morals — strangely stern, often, for such fragrant lodging — which are folded up in the bosoms of roses. He has no pride, and is deficient in a sense of the congruity and fitness of things. He lifts a pebble from the ground, and puts it aside more carefully than any gem; and on a nail in a cottage door he will hang the mantle of his thought, heavily brocaded with the gold of rhetoric."

It may be remarked in parenthesis that the above sentences were published in 1863, and they provide what is probably the first statement by an English writer with any repute of the famous doctrine "Art for art's sake" to which Smith seems to have worked his own way without the prompting of Gallican suggestion. Indeed, even in 1869, when Mr. Patrick Proctor Alexander edited Smith's posthumous volume, *Last Leaves*, he remarked in his introduction that he had thought of excluding the essay entitled "Literary Work," in which the same doctrine was more elaborately advocated, apparently

on the ground that it was a new heresy which might expose Smith to the pains and penalties of literary excommunication. How curious it seems. In ten years the essay which Mr. Alexander printed with an apology became the accepted creed of all or nearly all the younger men of letters in England, and now it is no longer either a dangerous luxury or an article of orthodox faith, but one of those uninteresting commonplaces which applied in one way is a truism, in another a fatuous absurdity. So does fortune turn her wheel for theories as well as for men and women.

In the passage just quoted Smith deals with the essay mainly as simple literature, but he loves and praises it not as literature only, but as autobiography; not merely as something that is in itself interesting and attractive, but as a window through which he can peer in upon something more interesting still — the master who built the house after his own design and made it an architectural projection of himself.

"You like to walk round peculiar or important men as you like to walk round a building, to view it from different points and in different lights. Of the essayist,

when his mood is communicative, you obtain a full picture. You are made his contemporary and familiar friend. You enter into his humours and his seriousness. You are made heir of his whims, prejudices, and playfulness. You walk through the whole nature of him as you walk through the streets of Pompeii, looking into the interior of stately mansions, reading the satirical scribblings on the walls. And the essayist's habit of not only giving you his thoughts, but telling you how he came by them, is interesting, because it shows you by what alchemy the ruder world becomes transmuted into the finer. We like to know the lineage of ideas, just as we like to know the lineage of great earls and swift race-horses. We like to know that the discovery of the law of gravitation was born of the fall of an apple in an English garden on a summer afternoon. Essays written after this fashion are racy of the soil in which they grow, as you taste the lava in the vines grown on the slopes of Etna, they say. There is a healthy Gascon flavour in Montaigne's Essays; and Charles Lamb's are scented with the primroses of Covent Garden."

In the first of these passages Alexander Smith speaks of the mantle of the essayist's thought "heavily brocaded with the gold of rhetoric," and he himself was a cunning embroiderer. It was a gift of nature, but he did not learn at once how he could best utilise it. He brocaded his poetry, and on poetry brocade even of gold is an impertinence, just as is paint — *pace* Gibson — on

the white marble of the sculptured group or figure. In the essay he found a form which relies less exclusively upon body of imagination and perfectness of pure outline — which is more susceptible to legitimate adornment by the ornamentation of a passing fancy. It is a form in which even the conceit is not unwelcome: to use the language of science the conceit finds in the essay its fit environment. Thus, in Smith's pages Napoleon dies at St. Helena "like an untended watch-fire;" Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn Law rhymer, is "Apollo, with iron dust upon his face, wandering among the Sheffield knife-grinders;" the solitary Dreamthorp doctor has a fancy for arguing with the good simple clergyman, but though "he cannot resist the temptation to hurl a fossil at Moses," "he wears his scepticism as a coquette wears her ribbons — to annoy if he cannot subdue — and when his purpose is served, he puts aside his scepticism — as the coquette puts her ribbons." When the black funeral creeps into Dreamthorp from some outlying hamlet, the people reverently doff their hats and stand aside, for, as Smith puts it, "Death does not walk about

here often, but when he does, he receives as much respect as the squire himself." There is, in this last sentence, a touch of quiet Addisonian irony; and, indeed, Smith reminds us at times of almost all his great predecessors in the art of essay-writing — of his prime favourites Montaigne and Bacon ("our earliest essayists and our best" is his own eulogium); and also of Addison, Steele, Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt. But it is never a reminder that brings with it a suggestion of imitation. The methods and graces of these distinguished forerunners are to be found in Smith's pages only by patient analysis, and then never in their crude state, for his personality fuses them into a new amalgam and stamps them with a new hall-mark.

Perhaps the most purely individual qualities of Smith's work are given to it partly by his remarkable aptitude for the presentation of his thought in simile and metaphor; partly by his fine feeling for colour, and, indeed, for all the elements of picturesqueness; and partly by a native tendency to sombreness of reflection which makes such a theme as that of the essay, "On Death

and the Fear of Dying," attractive rather than repellent, or — to speak, perhaps, with greater accuracy — repellent, yet irresistibly fascinating, as is the eye of the rattlesnake to its prey. The image-making endowment makes itself manifest in almost every passage that it would be possible to quote as characteristic; and it may be noted that the associative habit of mind betrays itself not merely in the sudden simile which transfixes a resemblance on the wing, but in the numerous pages in which Smith showed his love for tracing the links of the chain that connects the near and the far, the present and the past, the seen and the unseen. Thus he writes in his Dreamthorp cottage:

"That winter morning when Charles lost his head in front of the banqueting-hall of his own palace, the icicles hung from the eaves of the houses here, and the clown kicked the snowballs from his clouted shoon, and thought but of his supper when at three o'clock the red sun set in the purple mist. On that Sunday in June, while Waterloo was going on, the gossips, after morning service, stood on the country roads discussing agricultural prospects, without the slightest suspicion that the day passing over their heads would be a famous one in the calendar. . . . The last setting sun that Shakspeare saw reddened the windows here, and struck warmly on the faces of the hinds coming home

from the fields. The mighty storm that raged while Cromwell lay a-dying, made all the oak-woods groan round about here, and tore the thatch from the very roofs that I gaze upon. When I think of this I can almost, so to speak, lay my hand upon Shakspeare and upon Cromwell. These poor walls were contemporaries of both, and I find something affecting in the thought. The mere soil is, of course, full older than either, but *it* does not touch one in the same way. A wall is the creation of a human hand; the soil is not."

Smith's picturesqueness is fully in evidence here, though the passage was not quoted to illustrate it. Indeed, there are few writers who satisfy so largely the visual sense of the imagination. Even his literary appraisements — witness the essays on Dunbar and Chaucer, and that charming paper "A Shelf in my Bookcase" — have a pictorial quality, as if he must *see* something as well as *think* something. Here is Dreamthorp where the essayist, the transfigured Alexander Smith — "Smith's Smith" as the Autocrat of the Breakfast-table would put it — lives his ideal life:

"This place suits my whim, and I like it better year after year. As with everything else, since I began to love it I find it growing beautiful. Dreamthorp — a castle, a chapel, a lake, a straggling strip of grey houses, with a blue film of smoke over all — lies

embosomed in emerald. Summer with its daisies runs up to every cottage door. From the little height where I am now sitting I see it beneath me. Nothing could be more peaceful. The wind and the birds fly over it. A passing sunbeam makes brilliant a white gable-end, and brings out the colours of the blossomed apple-tree beyond, and disappears. I see figures in the street, but hear them not. The hands on the church clock seem always pointing to one hour. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine. I make a frame of my fingers and look at my picture. On the walls of the next Academy's exhibition will hang nothing half so beautiful."

This is the *tout ensemble*, but every detail has its own pictorial charm. There is the canal — a prosaic unpicturesque thing is a canal; but this particular canal has "a great white water-lily asleep on its olive-coloured face," while to the picture-making eye "a barge trailing up through it in the sunset is a pretty sight; and the heavenly crimsons and purples sleep quite lovingly upon its glossy ripples. Nor does the evening star disdain it, for as I walk along I see it mirrored as clearly as in the waters of the Mediterranean itself."

The sombreness of reflection noted as one of the characteristic features of Smith's work as an essayist gives to that work a

recognisable autumnal feeling. It is often difficult to think of it as the work of a young man full of the ordinary buoyant life of youth; though when the difficulty presents itself one may remember also that the young man was destined to die at thirty-seven — that fatal age for the children of imagination — and it is, perhaps, not too fanciful to indulge the thought that some presentiment of early doom may have given to Smith's meditative moods much of their pensive seriousness. However this may be, it is certain that Alexander Smith, with a constancy which the most careless reader cannot fail to note, recurred again and again, both when opportunity offered and when opportunity had to be made, to the theme of death, its mystery, its fear, and its fascination. In one of his poems, which I quote from memory, he speaks of his life as a highway which, at some unknown point, has his grave cut across; and even in the joyous "Spring Chanson" the poet, addressing the singing merle, drops suddenly from the major into the minor key, and ends upon the note by which the key is dominated:

"Men live and die, the song remains; and when
I list the passion of thy vernal breath
Methinks thou singest best to Love and Death—
To happy Lovers and to dying Men."

Autumn and death must needs be naturally allied in human thought, though to the joyous-minded even autumn will be associated with its present fruitage rather than with its presage of dissolution; but this intrusion of death into a celebration of the life and growth of spring seems irrelevant, almost morbid: it may even seem artificial, as if the poet were deliberately striving after a strong literary effect by the expedient of an unnatural juxtaposition of incongruous ideas. To a man of Smith's mind and temperament it has certainly neither irrelevance nor artificiality; whether we can rightly call it morbid depends upon the meaning we attach to a word to which the personal feeling rather than the common reason gives a definition. Smith's habit was to endeavour to realise death that he might more fully and richly realise life. "To denude death of its terrible associations," he writes, "were a vain attempt, the atmosphere is always cold around an iceberg;" and yet in imagi-

nation he loves to draw near the iceberg for some shivering moments that he may enjoy more exquisitely the warmth of summer sun or piled-up winter fire. To his constant thought

"There are considerations which rob death of its ghastliness, and help to reconcile us to it. The thoughtful happiness of a human being is complex, and in certain moved moments which, after they have gone, we can recognise to have been our happiest, some subtle thought of death has been curiously intermixed. And this subtle admixture it is that gives the happy moment its character — which makes the difference between the gladness of a child, resident in mere animal health and impulse, and too volatile to be remembered, and the serious joy of a man who looks before and after, and takes in both this world and the next. Speaking broadly, it may be said that it is from some obscure recognition of the fact of death that life draws its final sweetness. . . . This recognition does not always terrify. The spectre has the most cunning disguises, and often when near us, we are unaware of the fact of proximity. Unsuspected, this idea of death lurks in the sweetness of music; it has something to do with the pleasure with which we behold the vapour of morning; it comes between the passionate lips of lovers; it lives in the thrill of kisses. 'An inch deeper and you will find the emperor.' Probe joy to its last fibre and you will find death."

To preserve always in the background of the mind some great thought or momentous

interest, tends to insure a certain fine justice in a man's estimate of the relative proportions of smaller things lying in the front of it, and Alexander Smith's essays have a restful quality of measure, balance, and sanity. In the "Essay on an Old Subject," published in *Last Leaves*, the young man who had but recently gone into the thirties writes with imaginative prescience — or possibly from a premature experience — of the joys and gains of middle-age (by which he means the forty-fifth year or thereabouts); and there is in most of his essays, especially in the *Dreamthorp* papers which came earliest, a middle-aged maturity which charms and satisfies, and never disturbs. But it is not a middle-age which has ossified into routine and become dead to youth's enthusiasms — witness the fine ardour of the concluding sentence of the essay in which he "memorises" Carlyle's appearance at Edinburgh to deliver his Rectorial address: "When I saw him for the first time stand up amongst us the other day, and heard him speak kindly, brotherly, affectionate words . . . . I am not ashamed to confess that I felt moved towards him as I do not think, in any

possible combination of circumstances, I could have felt moved towards any other living man." And yet, though he has not lost youth's ardour, he has freed himself from youth's arrogant impatience; he can be moved by enthusiasms, but not driven helplessly before them; he can project himself from himself and survey his own thought "in the round;" he has learned the lessons of Clough's pregnant words, "and yet — consider it again." At the same time his manner is never that tantalising, irritating manner of explicit guards, reserves, limitations — the manner of the writer who is always making himself safe by the sudden "but" or "nevertheless" or "notwithstanding." The due limitation is conveyed implicitly, in the primal statement of the thought — in the touch of irony or humorous extravagance which hints with sufficing clearness that this or that is not to be interpreted *au pied de la lettre*. The delightful essay "On Vagabonds," at the close of the *Dreamthorp* volume, might be described roughly as a glorification of the life of Bohemia, and an impeachment, or at any rate a depreciation of commonplace Philis-

tine respectability. In dealing with such a theme with such a bent of mind, the temptation to force the note, to overcharge the colour, would be to most men — to all young men, impatient of restricting conventions — well-nigh irresistible; but Smith resists it with no apparent effort of resistance. There is no holding of himself in lest he should speak unadvisedly with his tongue; on the contrary, he lets himself go with perfect abandonment. The "genuine vagabond," he says, "takes captive the heart," and he declares it "high time that a moral game law were passed for the preservation of the wild and vagrant feelings of human nature;" but just when we expect the stroke of exaggeration there comes instead the light touch of saving humour, and we know that the essayist is in less danger even than we of losing his head, or, as the expressive cant phrase has it, "giving himself away."

Some of the few (and if I could succeed in increasing their number I should be greatly content) who know Alexander Smith's prose well, and love it even as they know, have probably favourite papers or

favourite groups. Some may feel especially drawn to the essays of pure reflection, such as "Death and the fear of Dying" and "The Importance of a Man to Himself;" others to that delightful group in which the familiar simplicities of nature supply texts for tranquil meditation — "Dreamthorp," "Christmas," and "Books and Gardens," in which last there is also some delightful character-portraiture in the vignettes of the village doctor and clergyman; others to the essays in literary appreciation, such as "Dunbar," "Geoffrey Chaucer," "Scottish Ballads," and "A Shelf in my Bookcase." In the words applied by Charles Lamb, with a certain free unscrupulousness to the whole world of books, I must say with regard to Alexander Smith's essays, "I have no preferences." To me they all have a charm which somewhat dulls the edge of discrimination, for the writer rather than the theme is the centre of interest; he is the hero of the play, and he is never off the stage. Still in some torture chamber of inquiry certain names might be extracted from me, and I think they would be "Dreamthorp," "Books and Gardens," and

"A Lark's Flight." This last study, which has not been previously named, is one of the most noteworthy of Smith's essays, and will be grateful to the more lazy readers inasmuch as it tells a story. It is the story of a murder and an execution, the murder vulgar and commonplace enough — a crime of brutal violence, the execution a sombrely picturesque function, with one striking incident which seized and held the imagination of the boy who witnessed it; and the story is told with an arresting vividness to which I know only one parallel in English literature, the narrative appendix to De Quincey's famous essay, "On Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts." The execution took place, after the old custom in Scotland, on the spot where the crime had been committed — a lonely stretch of grassland, some distance outside the city of Glasgow. The criminals were Irish navvies, members of a large gang employed in the neighbourhood, and as there were some rumours of a rescue, a detachment of cavalry, supplemented by field-pieces, surrounded the scaffold. Of the scene itself, and the one occurrence round which its

latent pathos crystallised, Smith gives the recollections of boyhood. The men were being brought in a cart to the place of execution, and when they reached the turn of the road where they could first see the black cross-beam with its empty halters, the boy noted the eager, fascinated gaze the doomed men cast upon it. At last the place was reached, and Smith writes:

"Around it a wide space was kept clear by the military; the cannon were placed in position; out flashed the swords of the dragoons; beneath and around on every side was the crowd. Between two brass helmets I could see the scaffold clearly enough, and when in a little while the men, bareheaded and with their attendants, appeared upon it, the surging crowd became stiffened with fear and awe. And now it was that the incident, so simple, so natural, so much in the ordinary course of things, and yet so frightful in its tragic suggestions, took place. Be it remembered that the season was early May, that the day was fine, that the wheatfields were clothing themselves in the green of the young crop, and that around the scaffold, standing on a sunny mound, a wide space was kept clear. When the men appeared beneath the beam, each under his own proper halter, there was a dead silence,—every one was gazing too intently to whisper to his neighbour even. Just then, out of the grassy space at the foot of the scaffold, in the dead silence audible to all, a lark rose from the side of its nest, and went sing-

ing upward in its happy flight. O heaven! how did that song translate itself into dying ears? Did it bring, in one wild burning moment, father and mother, and poor Irish cabin, and prayers said at bedtime, and the smell of turf fires, and innocent sweethearting, and rising and setting suns? Did it — but the dragoon's horse has become restive, and his helmet bobs up and down and blots everything; and there is a sharp sound, and I feel the great crowd heave and swing, and hear it torn by a sharp shiver of pity, and the men whom I saw so near but a moment ago are at immeasurable distance, and have solved the great enigma,— and the lark has not yet finished his flight: you can see and hear him yonder in the fringe of a white May cloud. . . . . There is a stronger element of terror in this incident of the lark than in any story of a similar kind I can remember."

Gasps of admiration are amateurish, provincial, ineffective, but after reading such a passage as this, the words that come first — at any rate to me — are not in the least critical but simply exclamatory. It is wonderful writing! Then comes a calmer and more analytical moment in which one discovers something of the secret of the art in what has seemed at first not art at all but sheer nature. Mr. Pater, in one of his most instructive essays, has shown that the "classical" element in art is "the quality of order in beauty," and that "it is that

addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character," romantic art at its best being moreover distinguished by a fine perfection of workmanship. This surely then is an impressive miniature example of romantic art with its combination of strangeness and beauty, and its flawless technique — its absolute saturation of the vehicle of expression with the very essence of the thing, the emotion that is to be expressed. Note the directness and simplicity of the early narrative sentences; they are a mere recital of facts, and their very baldness only mitigated by a single emotional phrase, "the surging crowd became stiffened with fear and awe," prepares the mind for what is to follow. And then, the sudden break in the second sentence beginning "Did it," — how perfectly natural it seems, and yet how dexterous it really is; how it renders perfectly and at a single stroke what the best-chosen words of narrative would have rendered jumblingly, the brevity of the interval between the lark's rising and the consummation of doom — the sharp bewildering suddenness of the end. Then, lastly, the curious in these things may

notice a certain peculiarity in the construction of the concluding sentence of the story — the penultimate sentence of the quotation. There are in the volume barely nine lines, and in these lines the word "and" occurs eleven times. All frequent and close repetitions of a single word are generally avoided by good writers, and the repetition of an insignificant conjunction such as "and" is, as a rule, something to be specially avoided. Smith habitually avoided as carefully as any of us, but here he had to give the feeling of impetuosity, of eager hurry to get the ghastly story told, and the "and" which rapidly accumulates detail upon detail recurs as naturally and inevitably as in the voluble speech of a little child bursting into her mother's room with some marvellous recital of adventure encountered in her morning walk. This is the high literary art which instinctively and perfectly adapts the means of language — of word, sound, pause, and cadence — to the end of absolute expression.

Alexander Smith himself is never wearisome; and it would ill become me to weary those whom I would fain interest by surplusage of comment; but I should like to

add a word or two concerning those essays in which he appears as a critic of literature. Mr. Oscar Wilde has said that all good criticism is simply autobiography — that is, I suppose, a statement of personal preferences. I accept the definition if I may enlarge it by saying that criticism is not merely a statement of personal preferences but of justifications for such preferences presented with a view to persuasion. Of course even with this rider the definition still leaves autobiography the main element in criticism, and of such autobiographical appraisement Smith was a master. Whether he formulated the rule never to write of any authors whose work he did not enjoy I cannot say: he certainly acted upon it with the most delightful results. So keen is his gusto, so adequate and appetising his expression of it, that one may dare to say the next best thing to reading Montaigne, Bacon, Chaucer, and the Scottish Ballads, is to read what Alexander Smith has to say about them. His talk about books is always so human that it will delight people whom one would not think of calling literary. He discourses on *The Canterbury Tales* not as a

man weighing and measuring a book, but as a wayfarer sitting in the inn-yard of the Tabard at Southwark, watching the crowd of pilgrims with the eye of an acute and good-natured observer, taking notes of their appearance, and drawing from it shrewd inferences as to habit and character. He has certain favourite volumes upon which he expatiates in the essay entitled "A Shelf in my Bookcase;" and the principle of selection is obvious enough. They are books full of a rich humanity; beneath their paragraphs or stanzas he can feel the beating heart. The literary vesture is *simply* a vesture which half reveals and half conceals the objects of his love — the man or woman who lives and breathes behind. He revels in the old Scotch ballads and German hymns, for in them the concealing veil is thin, and the thoughts and loves and pains of simple souls in dead centuries are laid open and bare. He prefers Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales* to his longer and more elaborate works, such as *Transformation* and *The Scarlet Letter*, because he finds more of the man in them, the solitary author who had no public to think of, and who wrote because

he must. He has a genuine catholicity, but it is not that uninteresting catholicity which lacks defined circumferences; and his general sensibility to excellence is emphasised by frank confession of his limitations. The author of *Paradise Lost* evidently lies a little outside the reach of Alexander Smith's tentacles of sympathy.

"Reading Milton is like dining off gold plate in a company of kings; very splendid, very ceremonious, and not a little appalling. Him I read but seldom, and only on high days and festivals of the spirit. Him I never lay down without feeling my appreciation increased for lesser men — never without the same kind of comfort that one returning from the presence feels when he doffs respectful attitude and dress of ceremony, and subsides into old coat, familiar arm-chair, and slippers. After long-continued organ-music the jangle of the Jew's harp is felt as an exquisite relief."

There is a trace of Philistinism here — the Philistinism which is not ashamed but rather complacent; and it may seem a strange whim on the part of one who loves Smith's work to choose as a final sample of it a passage which, some of the elect may think, does not show him at his best. But Danton's commendation of audacity, though not universally valid, is a word of wisdom to the advocate with a strong case. Alex-

ander Smith's best is good with such a rare and delightful quality of goodness that his appreciator shows no great temerity in abandoning all reserves and concealments. He is not afraid of painting the wart, because it is overpowered by strength of feature and charm of expression. Alexander Smith, as he shows himself in his prose — in *Dreamthorp*, in *Last Leaves*, and in that entrancing book *A Summer in Skye* — is one of those writers concerning whom even a lover may tell not only the truth, but the whole truth. For myself, I read his essays when I was young and found them full of stimulation; I have read them again since I have become middle-aged, and have found them satisfyingly rest-giving. At no time have they been found wanting in something of rare and delicate delight. If criticism be indeed autobiography, no verdict upon the essays of Alexander Smith could well be at once more critical or more praiseful than this confession. I love Mr. Stevenson and my later contemporaries; but I think I must confess that I love my early contemporary, Mr. Stevenson's countryman and forerunner, better still.

The Bibelot

"But O the heavy change, now thou art gon,
Now thou art gon, and never must return!"

I.

In 1904 it was still possible to write a book on William Butler Yeats and the Irish Revival *and make no mention of J. M. Synge. To-day it would be impossible to produce such a work with any pretense of accuracy without this name being writ large in the forefront of Irish authors of the first rank. While sufficient material exists to form an estimate of what Synge has come to mean no complete biography has been given the public.*

John Millington Synge was born at Rathfarnham, County Dublin, April 16, 1871. He was educated at Trinity College and after taking his degree visited Germany, travelled on foot through France and Bavaria and is heard of in Rome. In January, 1895, he reached Paris where he lived alone for some time "in a top-floor room of a students' hotel in the Latin quarter." As the possessor of a very limited income he wrote for a few Irish periodicals and, as we may presume, was

not too liberally paid for it. Then in 1899 Mr. W. B. Yeats made his greatest discovery: acting upon his advice Synge went back to Ireland, for the next few years living a portion of each year in Aran. His book on The Aran Islands, *although written before his earliest* Plays *were printed, did not find a publisher until after much heart-wounding delay. Finally, in 1907, his name having reached the marketable stage, the volume was brought out in London by Mr. Elkin Mathews who, we are assured, has since had no reason to repent his golden opportunity. It is true that we still lack a life of Synge such as one man only can be depended on for adequate portrayal. Who can doubt that William Butler Yeats is this man?*

II.

A bibliographical account of Synge's dramatic works should properly begin with

I. Riders to the Sea, *which first appeared in* Samhain: An Occasional Review edited by W. B. Yeats, *in September, 1903, and first performed at Molesworth Hall, Dublin, February 25, 1904.*

II. His second play, In the Shadow of the Glen, *was printed in* Samhain, *December, 1904. It had been previously acted at Molesworth Hall, October 8, 1903. Not*

until 1905 were these two plays issued in book form when they appeared as No. 24 in Mr. Elkin Mathews' Vigo Cabinet Series, of which some eight or more reissues have appeared up to the present time.

III. His third play, The Well of the Saints *with an Introduction by Mr. Yeats bears the London imprint of A. H. Bullen, being No. 4, of a Series of Plays for an Irish Theatre, 1905. This was first presented at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in February, 1905.*

IV. The fourth and greatest play of all, The Playboy of the Western World: A Comedy in Three Acts, *was given at the Abbey Theatre, on January 26, 1907, and for the first time in London at the Great Queen Street Theatre in June of the same year. The first edition was published by Maunsel & Company in February, 1907. From that time on this Dublin firm with but two exceptions is associated with whatever bears the name of J. M. Synge as author.*

V. His fifth play, The Tinker's Wedding: A Comedy in Two Acts, *was also put forth in 1907. It was first performed at His Majesty's Theatre, London, on November 11, 1909.*

VI. Synge's sixth and final play, Deirdre of the Sorrows, *was first printed at the*

Cuala Press, Churchtown, Ireland, 1910, and first performed at the Abbey Theatre on January 13th the same year. In 1910 the works of John M. Synge, definitive edition, four volumes, octavo, were issued by Maunsel, who in 1911, brought out the Plays in a pocket edition, four volumes. Synge's Complete Works were then issued (Library edition), five volumes, octavo, in 1912.

Besides the above there are The Aran Islands: With Drawings by Jack B. Yeats, *Dublin and London,* (*1907*), *and* Poems and Translations, *Cuala Press,* (*1909*). *All have been reprinted by Messrs. John W. Luce & Company, Boston, in very desirable format including the early contributions to periodicals entitled* In Wicklow, *&c.*, (*1912*). *It is with their kind permission that we now place before our readers Synge's two earliest plays.*

III.

It is now in order that we give specific information as to what is indispensable in any thorough-going study of Synge and what he accomplished in the brief period allotted him by the dark Providence that rules the world. First of all The Aran Islands *is a genuine autobiography for the time it covers, and along with it must be*

taken the sketches and studies In Wicklow, West Kerry, *etc. The short Prefaces to* Poems and Translations, The Playboy, *and* The Tinker's Wedding *should not be neglected. Then there are two articles by Mr. W. B. Yeats fortunately made accessible in* The Cutting of an Agate, (*New York, 1912*): *a reprint of his Preface to Synge's* Poems and Translations; *and, that which stands at the head of all yet written, an essay on* J. M. Synge and The Ireland of His Time.

Besides these leading authorities one should read J. M. Synge and The Irish Dramatic Movement *by Francis Bickley,* (*1912*); J. M. Synge: A Critical Study *by P. P. Howe,* (*1912*); Irish Plays and Playwrights, *by Cornelius Weygandt,* (*1913*). *There are also some remarks worth while in Mr. Holbrook Jackson's* All Manner of Folk: Interpretations and Studies, (*1912*), *and a fine though short essay in* The Pathos of Distance *by James Huneker,* (*1913*). *Last but not least Lady Gregory's article on* Synge *in* The English Review *for March, 1913, is indispensable and delightfully* intime. *To round out our list, two articles in* The Nation, *for April 3, 1909, and for December 26, 1912, the latter an able summing up by Mr.*

Stuart P. Sherman, which should be read and set to heart as an unbiassed opinion.

IV.

From the foregoing array of facts one perceives that the greatest dramatic writer Ireland has yet produced came before the world and departed out of it, "deeds all done, songs all sung," in barely six years' time, reckoning from the date of his first performed play in 1903 to the day of his death on March 24, 1909. The year before he died he knew he must go, "though he told no one about it but his betrothed." As in the exquisite couplet by Burns which we so unexpectedly come upon, Synge was

> *"Like the borealis race*
> *That flit ere you can point their place."*

Considering how he left his last and most poignant play uncorrected and lacking the finishing touch, we recall

> *"him that left half told*
> *The story of Cambuscan bold."*

With deep poetic instinct Yeats in his Preface to the First Printed Edition of the Poems and Translations *prefixed the words of that old Greek follower of Plato: "The lonely returns to the Lonely, the Divine to the Divinity." The same austere*

utterance Lionel Johnson had paraphrased and applied to his own short career in the last lines of a poem of sombre sincerity, The Dark Angel:

> *"Lonely unto the Lone I go;*
> *Divine to the Divinity."*

All too swiftly Synge has reached the land of Hy-Brasil, "where fierce indignation will lacerate his heart no more." But he remains with us one of those "who speak a few simple sentences which never die."

What has been said by those best qualified to say anything of value concerning Synge's personality and his plays, we have now indicated, briefly, but, as we trust, convincingly. Let us dwell upon a final paragraph by Mr. Yeats which for sheer beauty of expression is unequalled:

"He was a solitary, undemonstrative man, never asking pity, nor complaining, nor seeking sympathy but in this book's momentary cries: all folded up in brooding intellect, knowing nothing of new books and newspapers, reading the great masters alone; and he was but the more hated because he gave his country what it needed, an unmoved mind where there is a perpetual last day, a trumpeting, and coming up to judgment."

SYNGE'S GRAVE.

My grief! that they have laid you in the town
Within the moidher of its thousand wheels
And busy feet that travel up and down.

They had a right to choose a better bed
Far off among the hills where silence steals
In on the soul with comfort-bringing tread.

The curlew would have keened for you all day,
The wind across the heather cried Ochone
For sorrow of his brother gone away.

In Glenmalure far off from town-born men
Why would they not have let you sleep alone
At peace there in the shadow of the glen?

To tend your grave you should have had the sun,
The fraughan and the moss, the heather brown,
And gorse turned gold for joy of spring begun.

You should have had your brothers wind and rain,
And in the dark the stars all looking down
To ask "When will he take the road again?"

The herdsmen of the lone back hills that drive
The mountain ewes to some far-distant fair
Would stand and say, "We knew him well alive,

That God may rest his soul!" Then they would pass
Into the silence brooding everywhere,
And leave you to sleep below the grass.

But now among these alien city graves
What way are you without the wind's harsh breath,
You free-born son of mountains and wild waves?

Ah! God knows better — here you 've no abode,
So long ago you had the laugh at death,
And rose, and took the windswept mountain road.

W. M. LETTS.

TWO PLAYS

By

J. M. SYNGE

I. RIDERS TO THE SEA

II. IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN.

In a distracted theatre, in which there is a perpetual running hither and thither, Synge remains, "like a star fixed, not moved with any thunder." His clear light, absolutely his own burns as steadfast as his Deirdre's, and it will as certainly continue to illumine the time to come. It would be difficult to name another contemporary whose perdurable qualities are more certain. Synge, like Goldsmith, "flowered late," in the phrase of Dr. Johnson; he died at the age when Molière was writing his first successful comedy. The bulk of his work is small; it may even be doubted whether he would have added very greatly to it, for the speech in which he chose to write had its own characteristic limitations — already he seemed to be going in some fear of repeating himself, and at his death his plans were rather for work other than dramatic. He spoke of putting the "Imitation of Christ" into the beautiful prose of his translations. If he had lived, he could not but have added to the number of his plays; and yet, in the six plays he has left us, what that is essential in life has he failed to include? Our mention, in making this study, has been of the greatest names, and not unsuitably; for, try as we will, in looking back over his work, we cannot be rid of the sense of his absolute achievment. Not width but intensity is the aim of art, said Wilde, in one of his accidental moments of true vision. Certainly, of all the arts, it is true of the dramatic.

J. M. Synge: *A Critical Study by P. P. Howe*, London, and New York, (Mitchell Kennerly,) 1912.

I.

RIDERS TO THE SEA.

PERSONS

MAURYA (*an old woman*)
BARTLEY (*her son*)
CATHLEEN (*her daughter*)
NORA (*a younger daughter*)
MEN AND WOMEN.

SCENE.— *An Island off the West of Ireland.*

(*Cottage kitchen, with nets, oil-skins, spinning wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. Cathleen, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. Nora, a young girl, puts her head in at the door.*)

NORA (*in a low voice*). Where is she?

CATHLEEN. She 's lying down, God help her, and may be sleeping, if she 's able.

(*Nora comes in softly and takes a bundle from under her shawl.*)

CATHLEEN (*spinning the wheel rapidly*). What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is after bringing

them. It 's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal.

(*Cathleen stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen.*)

NORA. We 're to find out if it 's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN. How would they be Michael's, Nora. How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA. The young priest says he 's known the like of it. "If it 's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he 's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they 're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she 'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting."

(*The door which Nora half closed is blown open by a gust of wind.*)

CATHLEEN (*looking out anxiously*). Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN. Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad, God help us. There 's a great roaring in the west, and it 's worse it 'll be getting when the tide 's turned to the wind. (*She goes over to the table with the bundle.*) Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. Maybe she 'ld wake up on us, and come in before we 'd done (*coming to the table*). It 's a long time we 'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA (*goes to the inner door and listens*). She 's moving about on the bed. She 'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I 'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she 'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east.

(*They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney; Cathleen goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. Maurya comes from the inner room.*)

MAURYA (*looking up at Cathleen and speaking querulously*). Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There 's a cake baking at

the fire for a short space (*throwing down the turf*), and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

(*Nora picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven.*)

MAURYA (*sitting down on a stool at the fire*). He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He 'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAURYA. Where is he itself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I 'm thinking it won't be long till he 's here now, for the tide 's turning at the green head, and the hooker 's tacking from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear some one passing the big stones.

NORA (*looking out*). He 's coming now, and he in a hurry.

BARTLEY (*comes in and looks round the room. Speaking sadly and quietly.*) Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN (*coming down*). Give it to him, Nora; it 's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA (*giving him a rope*). Is that it, Bartley?

MAURYA. You 'ld do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards (*Bartley takes the rope*). It will be wanting in this place, I 'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it 's a deep grave we 'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY (*beginning to work with the rope.*) I 've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

MAURYA. It 's a hard thing they' ll be saying below if the body is washed up and there 's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you 'ld find in Connemara.

(*She looks round at the boards.*)

BARTLEY. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days,

and a strong wind flowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA. If it isn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY (*working at the halter, to Cathleen*). Let you go down each day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA. How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY (*to Cathleen*). If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drown'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

(*Bartley lays down the halter, takes off his*

old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel.)

BARTLEY (*to Nora*). Is she coming to the pier?

NORA (*looking out*). She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails.

BARTLEY (*getting his purse and tobacco*). I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA (*turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head*). Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY (*taking the halter*). I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me. . . The blessing of God on you.

(*He goes out.*)

MAURYA (*crying out as he is in the door*). He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll

not see him again. He 's gone now, and when the black night is falling I 'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

(*Maurya takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round.*)

NORA (*turning towards her*). You 're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN (*crying out*). The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we 're after forgetting his bit of bread.

(*She comes over to the fire.*)

NORA. And it 's destroyed he 'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN (*turning the cake out of the oven*). It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There 's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever.

(*Maurya sways herself on her stool.*)

CATHLEEN (*cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth; to Maurya*). Let

you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You 'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God speed you," the way he 'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA (*taking the bread*). Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA (*standing up unsteadily*). It 's hard set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN (*looking at her anxiously*). Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she 'll slip on the big stones.

NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA (*taking a stick Nora gives her*). In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

(*She goes out slowly.*)

(*Nora goes over to the ladder.*)

CATHLEEN. Wait, Nora, maybe she 'ld turn back quickly. She 's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she 'ld do.

NORA. Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN (*looking out*). She 's gone now. Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she 'll be out of it again.

NORA (*getting the bundle from the loft*). The young priest said he 'd be passing to-morrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it 's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN (*taking the bundle*). Did he say what way they were found?

NORA (*coming down*). "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN (*trying to open the bundle*). Give me a knife, Nora, the string 's perished with the salt water, and there 's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA (*giving her a knife*). I 've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN (*cutting the string*). It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago — the man sold us that knife — and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be in seven days you 'ld be in Donegal.

NORA. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

(*Cathleen opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly.*)

CATHLEEN (*in a low voice*). The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it 's his they are surely?

NORA. I 'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other (*she looks through some clothes hanging in the corner*). It 's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN. I 'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it (*pointing to the corner*). There 's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

(*Nora brings it to her and they compare the flannel.*)

CATHLEEN. It 's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA (*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out*). It 's Michael, Cathleen, it 's Michael; God spare his soul,

and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN (*taking the stocking*). It 's a plain stocking.

NORA. It 's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN (*counts the stitches*). It 's that number is in it (*crying out*). Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA (*swinging herself half round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes*). And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN (*after an instant*). Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA (*looking out*). She is, Cathleen. She 's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she 'll come in. Maybe it 's easier she 'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we

won't let on we 've heard anything the time he 's on the sea.

NORA (*helping Cathleen to close the bundle*). We 'll put them here in the corner.

(*They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. Cathleen goes back to the spinning-wheel.*)

NORA. Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light 'll not be on you.

(*Nora sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. Maurya comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and Nora points to the bundle of bread.*)

CATHLEEN (*after spinning for a moment*). You didn't give him his bit of bread?

(*Maurya begins to keen softly, without turning round.*)

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down?

(*Maurya goes on keening.*)

CATHLEEN (*a little impatiently*). God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that 's

done? Did you see Bartley, I 'm saying to you.

MAURYA (*with a weak voice*). My heart 's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN (*as before*). Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN (*leaves her wheel and looks out*). God forgive you; he 's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA (*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair. With a frightened voice*). The gray pony behind him. . .

CATHLEEN (*coming to the fire*). What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA (*speaking very slowly*). I 've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

CATHLEEN and NORA. Uah.

(*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.*)

NORA. Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to

myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him (*she puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes*). The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN. What is it you seen?

MAURYA. I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN (*speaking softly*). You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he 's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA (*a little defiantly*). I 'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it — with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN (*begins to keen*). It 's destroyed we are from this day. It 's destroyed, surely.

NORA. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God won't leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA (*in a low voice, but clearly*). It 's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I 've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house — six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world — and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they 're gone now the lot of them. . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on one plank, and in by that door.

(*She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.*)

NORA (*in a whisper*). Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north-east?

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper*). There 's some one after crying out by the seashore.

MAURYA (*continues without hearing anything*). There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark

night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it — it was a dry day, Nora — and leaving a track to the door.

(*She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.*)

MAURYA (*half in a dream, to Cathleen*). Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA. There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when

a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it 's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was in it.

CATHLEEN. It 's Michael, God spare him, for they 're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north.

(*She reaches out and hands Maurya the clothes that belonged to Michael. Maurya stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. Nora looks out.*)

NORA. They 're carrying a thing among them and there 's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper to the women who have come in*). Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. It is surely, God rest his soul.

(*Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of Bartley, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table.*)

CATHLEEN (*to the women, as they are doing so*). What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. The gray pony knocked him over into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

(*Maurya has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. Cathleen and Nora kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.*)

MAURYA (*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*). They 're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I 'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I 'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. (*To Nora.*) Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there 's a small sup still on the dresser.

(*Nora gives it to her.*)

MAURYA (*drops Michael's clothes across Bartley's feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him*). It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't

that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I 'ld be saying; but it 's a great rest I 'll have now, and it 's time surely. It 's a great rest I 'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it 's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking.

(*She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.*)

CATHLEEN (*to an old man*). Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you 'll be working.

THE OLD MAN (*looking at the boards*). Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It 's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she 's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It 's getting old she is, and broken.

(*Maurya stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of Michael's clothes*

beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.)

NORA (*in a whisper to Cathleen*). She 's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It 's fonder she was of Michael, and would any one have thought that?

CATHLEEN (*slowly and clearly*). An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA (*puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on Bartley's feet*). They 're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn (*bending her head*); and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world.

(*She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.*)

MAURYA (*continuing*). Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the

Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

(*She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly.*)

II.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN.

PERSONS

DAN BURKE (*farmer and herd*)
NORA BURKE (*his wife*)
MICHEAL DARA (*a young herd*)
A TRAMP

SCENE. — *The last cottage at the head of a long glen in County Wicklow.*

(*Cottage kitchen; turf fire on the right; a bed near it against the wall with a body lying on it covered with a sheet. A door is at the other end of the room, with a low table near it, and stools, or wooden chairs. There are a couple of glasses on the table, and a bottle of whisky, as if for a wake, with two cups, a tea-pot, and a home-made cake. There is another small door near the bed. Nora Burke is moving about the room, settling a few things, and lighting candles on the table, looking now and then at the bed with an uneasy look. Some one knocks softly at the door. She takes up a stocking with money from the table and puts it in her pocket. Then she opens the door.*)

TRAMP (*outside*). Good evening to you, lady of the house.

NORA. Good evening, kindly stranger, it's a wild night, God help you, to be out in the rain falling.

TRAMP. It is, surely, and I walking to Brittas from the Aughrim fair.

NORA. Is it walking on your feet, stranger?

TRAMP. On my two feet, lady of the house, and when I saw the light below I thought maybe if you'd a sup of new milk and a quiet decent corner where a man could sleep — (*he looks in past her and sees the dead man*). The Lord have mercy on us all!

NORA. It doesn't matter anyway, stranger, come in out of the rain.

TRAMP (*coming in slowly and going towards the bed*). Is it departed he is?

NORA. It is, stranger. He's after dying on me, God forgive him, and there I am now with a hundred sheep beyond on the hills, and no turf drawn for the winter.

TRAMP (*looking closely at the dead man*). It's a queer look is on him for a man that's dead.

NORA (*half-humorously*). He was always queer, stranger, and I suppose them that 's queer and they living men will be queer bodies after.

TRAMP. Isn't it a great wonder you 're letting him lie there, and he is not tidied, or laid out itself?

NORA (*coming to the bed*). I was afeard, stranger, for he put a black curse on me this morning if I 'ld touch his body the time he 'ld die sudden, or let any one touch it except his sister only, and it 's ten miles away she lives in the big glen over the hill.

TRAMP (*looking at her and nodding slowly*). It 's a queer story he wouldn't let his own wife touch him, and he dying quiet in his bed.

NORA. He was an old man, and an odd man, stranger, and it 's always up on the hills he was thinking thoughts in the dark mist. (*She pulls back a bit of the sheet.*) Lay your hand on him now, and tell me if it 's cold he is surely.

TRAMP. Is it getting the curse on me you 'ld be, woman of the house? I wouldn't lay my hand on him for the Lough Nahanagan and it filled with gold.

NORA (*looking uneasily at the body*). Maybe cold would be no sign of death with the like of him, for he was always cold, every day since I knew him, — and every night, stranger, — (*she covers up his face and comes away from the dead;*) but I'm thinking it's dead he is surely, for he's complaining a while back of a pain in his heart, and this morning, the time he was going off to Brittas for three days or four, he was taken with a sharp turn. Then he went into his bed and he was saying it was destroyed he was, the time the shadow was going up through the glen, and when the sun set on the bog beyond he made a great lep, and let a great cry out of him, and stiffened himself out the like of a dead sheep.

TRAMP (*crosses himself*). God rest his soul.

NORA (*pouring him out a glass of whisky*). Maybe that would do you better than the milk of the sweetest cow in County Wicklow.

TRAMP. The Almighty God reward you, and may it be to your good health. (*He drinks.*)

NORA (*giving him a pipe and tobacco*). I've no pipes saving his own, stranger, but they're sweet pipes to smoke.

TRAMP. Thank you kindly, lady of the house.

NORA. Sit down now, stranger, and be taking your rest.

TRAMP (*filling a pipe and looking about the room*). I've walked a great way through the world, lady of the house, and seen great wonders, but I never seen a wake till this day with fine spirits, and good tobacco, and the best of pipes, and no one to taste them but a woman only.

NORA. Didn't you hear me say it was only after dying on me he was when the sun went down, and how would I go out into the glen and tell the neighbours, and I a lone woman with no house near me?

TRAMP (*drinking*). There's no offence, lady of the house?

NORA. No offence in life, stranger. How would the like of you, passing in the dark night, know the lonesome way I was with no house near me at all?

TRAMP (*sitting down*). I knew rightly. (*He lights his pipe so that there is a sharp light beneath his haggard face.*) And I was thinking, and I coming in through the door, that it's many a lone woman would be afeard of

the like of me in the dark night, in a place wouldn't be as lonesome as this place, where there aren't two living souls would see the little light you have shining from the glass.

NORA (*slowly*). I'm thinking many would be afeard, but I never knew what way I'd be afeard of begger or bishop or any man of you at all. (*She looks towards the window and lowers her voice.*) It's other things than the like of you, stranger, would make a person afeard.

TRAMP (*looking round with a half-shudder*). It is surely, God help us all!

NORA (*looking at him for a moment with curiosity*). You're saying that, stranger, as if you were easy afeard.

TRAMP (*speaking mournfully*). Is it myself, lady of the house, that does be walking round in the long nights, and crossing the hills when the fog is on them, the time a little stick would seem as big as your arm, and a rabbit as big as a bay horse, and a stack of turf as big as a towering church in the city of Dublin? If myself was easily afeard, I'm telling you, it's long ago I'ld have been locked into the Richmond Asylum, or maybe have run up into the back hills

with nothing on me but an old shirt, and been eaten with crows the like of Patch Darcy — the Lord have mercy on him — in the year that's gone.

NORA (*with interest*). You knew Darcy?

TRAMP. Wasn't I the last one heard his living voice in the whole world?

NORA. There were great stories of what was heard at that time, but would any one believe the things they do be saying in the glen?

TRAMP. It was no lie, lady of the house. . . . I was passing below on a dark night the like of this night, and the sheep were lying under the ditch and every one of them coughing, and choking, like an old man, with the great rain and the fog. Then I heard a thing talking — queer talk, you wouldn't believe at all, and you out of your dreams, — and "Merciful God," says I, "if I begin hearing the like of that voice out of the thick mist, I'm destroyed surely." Then I run, and I run, and I run, till I was below in Rathvanna. I got drunk that night, I got drunk in the morning, and drunk the day after, — I was coming from the races beyond — and the third day they found

Darcy. . . . Then I knew it was himself I was after hearing, and I wasn't afeard any more.

NORA (*speaking sorrowfully and slowly*). God spare Darcy, he 'ld always look in here and he passing up or passing down, and it 's very lonesome I was after him a long while (*she looks over at the bed and lowers her voice, speaking very clearly,*) and then I got happy again — if it 's ever happy we are, stranger, — for I got used to being lonesome.

(*A short pause; then she stands up.*)

NORA. Was there any one on the last bit of the road, stranger, and you coming from Aughrim?

TRAMP. There was a young man with a drift of mountain ewes, and he running after them this way and that.

NORA (*with a half-smile*). Far down, stranger?

TRAMP. A piece only.

(*She fills the kettle and puts it on the fire.*)

NORA. Maybe, if you 're not easy afeard, you 'ld stay here a short while alone with himself.

TRAMP. I would surely. A man that 's dead can do no hurt.

NORA (*speaking with a sort of constraint*). I'm going a little back to the west, stranger, for himself would go there one night and another and whistle at that place, and then the young man you're after seeing — a kind of a farmer has come up from the sea to live in a cottage beyond — would walk round to see if there was a thing we'ld have to be done, and I'm wanting him this night, the way he can go down into the glen when the sun goes up and tell the people that himself is dead.

TRAMP (*looking at the body in the sheet*). It's myself will go for him, lady of the house, and let you not be destroying yourself with the great rain.

NORA. You wouldn't find your way, stranger, for there's a small path only, and it running up between two sluigs where an ass and cart would be drowned. (*She puts a shawl over her head.*) Let you be making yourself easy, and saying a prayer for his soul, and it's not long I'll be coming again.

TRAMP (*moving uneasily*). Maybe if you'd a piece of a grey thread and a sharp needle — there's great safety in a needle, lady of the house — I'ld be putting a little stitch here

and there in my old coat, the time I'll be praying for his soul, and it going up naked to the saints of God.

NORA (*takes a needle and thread from the front of her dress and gives it to him*). There's the needle, stranger, and I'm thinking you won't be lonesome, and you used to the back hills, for isn't a dead man itself more company than to be sitting alone, and hearing the winds crying, and you not knowing on what thing your mind would stay?

TRAMP (*slowly*). It's true, surely, and the Lord have mercy on us all!

(*Nora goes out. The Tramp begins stitching one of the tags in his coat, saying the "De Profundis" under his breath. In an instant the sheet is drawn slowly down, and Dan Burke looks out. The Tramp moves uneasily, then looks up, and springs to his feet with a movement of terror.*)

DAN (*with a hoarse voice*). Don't be afeard, stranger; a man that's dead can do no hurt.

TRAMP (*trembling*). I meant no harm, your honour; and won't you leave me easy to be saying a little prayer for your soul?

(*A long whistle is heard outside.*)

DAN (*sitting up in his bed and speaking*

fiercely). Ah, the devil mend her. . . . Do you hear that, stranger? Did ever you hear another woman could whistle the like of that with two fingers in her mouth? (*He looks at the table hurriedly.*) I 'm destroyed with the drouth, and let you bring me a drop quickly before herself will come back.

TRAMP (*doubtfully*). Is it not dead you are?

DAN. How would I be dead; and I as dry as a baked bone, stranger?

TRAMP (*pouring out the whisky*). What will herself say if she smells the stuff on you, for I 'm thinking it 's not for nothing you 're letting on to be dead?

DAN. It is not, stranger, but she won't be coming near me at all, and it 's not long now I 'll be letting on, for I 've a cramp in my back, and my hip 's asleep on me, and there 's been the devil's own fly itching my nose. It 's near dead I was wanting to sneeze, and you blathering about the rain, and Darcy (*bitterly*) — the devil choke him — and the towering church. (*Crying out impatiently.*) Give me that whisky. Would you have herself come back before I taste a drop at all?

(*Tramp gives him the glass.*)

DAN (*after drinking*). Go over now to that cupboard, and bring me a black stick you 'll see in the west corner by the wall.

TRAMP (*taking a stick from the cupboard*). Is it that?

DAN. It is, stranger; it 's a long time I 'm keeping that stick for I 've a bad wife in the house.

TRAMP (*with a queer look*). Is it herself, master of the house, and she a grand woman to talk?

DAN. It 's herself, surely, it 's a bad wife she is — a bad wife for an old man, and I 'm getting old, God help me, though I 've an arm to me still. (*He takes the stick in his hand.*) Let you wait now a short while, and it 's a great sight you 'll see in this room in two hours or three. (*He stops to listen.*) Is that somebody above?

TRAMP (*listening*). There 's a voice speaking on the path.

DAN. Put that stick here in the bed and smooth the sheet the way it was lying. (*He covers himself up hastily.*) Be falling to sleep now and don't let on you know anything, or I 'll be having your life. I wouldn't have

told you at all but it's destroyed with the drouth I was.

TRAMP (*covering his head*). Have no fear, master of the house. What is it I know of the like of you that I'ld be saying a word or putting out my hand to stay you at all? (*He goes back to the fire, sits down on a stool with his back to the bed and goes on stitching his coat.*)

DAN (*under the sheet, querulously*). Stranger.

TRAMP (*quickly*). Whisht, whisht. Be quiet I'm telling you, they're coming now at the door.

(*Nora comes in with Micheal Dara, a tall, innocent young man behind her.*)

NORA. I wasn't long at all, stranger, for I met himself on the path.

TRAMP. You were middling long, lady of the house.

NORA. There was no sign from himself?

TRAMP. No sign at all, lady of the house.

NORA (*to Micheal*). Go over now and pull down the sheet, and look on himself, Micheal Dara, and you'll see it's the truth I'm telling you.

MICHEAL. I will not, Nora, I do be afeard of the dead. (*He sits down on a stool next the*

table facing the tramp. Nora puts the kettle on a lower book of the pot-books, and piles turf under it.)

NORA (*turning to Tramp*). Will you drink a sup of tea with myself and the young man, stranger, or (*speaking more persuasively*) will you go into the little room and stretch yourself a short while on the bed, I 'm thinking it 's destroyed you are walking the length of that way in the great rain.

TRAMP. Is it go away and leave you, and you having a wake, lady of the house? I will not surely. (*He takes a drink from his glass which he has beside him.*) And it 's none of your tea I 'm asking either. (*He goes on stitching.*)

(*Nora makes the tea.*)

MICHEAL (*after looking at the tramp rather scornfully for a moment*). That 's a poor coat you have, God help you, and I 'm thinking it 's a poor tailor you are with it.

TRAMP. If it 's a poor tailor I am, I 'm thinking it 's a poor herd does be running back and forward after a little handful of ewes the way I seen yourself running this day, young fellow, and you coming from the fair. (*Nora comes back to the table.*)

NORA (*to Micheal in a low voice*). Let you not mind him at all, Micheal Dara, he has a drop taken and it 's soon he 'll be falling asleep.

MICHEAL. It 's no lie he 's telling, I was destroyed surely. They were that wilful they were running off into one man's bit of oats, and another man's bit of hay, and tumbling into the red bogs till it 's more like a pack of old goats than sheep they were. Mountain ewes is a queer breed, Nora Burke, and I 'm not used to them at all.

NORA (*settling the tea things*). There 's no one can drive a mountain ewe but the men do be reared in the Glen Malure, I 've heard them say, and above by Rathvanna, and the Glen Imaal, men the like of Patch Darcy, God spare his soul, who would walk through five hundred sheep and miss one of them, and he not reckoning them at all.

MICHEAL (*uneasily*). Is it the man went queer in his head the year that 's gone?

NORA. It is surely.

TRAMP (*plaintively*). That was a great man, young fellow, a great man I 'm telling you. There was never a lamb from his own ewes he wouldn't know before it was

marked, and he 'ld run from this to the city of Dublin and never catch for his breath.

NORA (*turning round quickly*). He was a great man surely, stranger, and isn 't it a grand thing when you hear a living man saying a good word of a dead man, and he mad dying ?

TRAMP. It 's the truth I 'm saying, God spare his soul. (*He puts the needle under the collar of his coat, and settles himself to sleep in the chimney corner.*)

(*Nora sits down at the table; their backs are turned to the bed.*)

MICHEAL (*looking at her with a queer look*). I heard tell this day, Nora Burke, that it was on the path below Patch Darcy would be passing up and passing down, and I heard them say he 'ld never pass it night or morning without speaking with yourself.

NORA (*in a low voice*). It was no lie you heard, Micheal Dara.

MICHEAL. I 'm thinking it 's a power of men you 're after knowing if it 's in a lonesome place you live itself.

NORA (*giving him his tea*). It 's in a lonesome place you do have to be talking with some one, and looking for some one, in

the evening of the day, and if it 's a power of men I 'm after knowing they were fine men, for I was a hard child to please, and a hard girl to please (*she looks at him a little sternly*), and it 's a hard woman I am to please this day, Micheal Dara, and it 's no lie I 'm telling you.

MICHEAL (*looking over to see that the tramp is asleep, and then pointing to the dead man*). Was it a hard woman to please you were when you took himself for your man ?

NORA. What way would I live and I an old woman if I didn't marry a man with a bit of a farm, and cows on it, and sheep on the back hills ?

MICHEAL (*considering*). That 's true, Nora, and maybe it 's no fool you were, for there 's good grazing on it, if it is a lonesome place, and I 'm thinking it 's a good sum he 's left behind.

NORA (*taking the stocking with money from her pocket, and putting it on the table*). I do be thinking in the long nights it was a big fool I was that time, Micheal Dara, for what good is a bit of a farm with cows on it, and sheep on the back hills, when you do be sitting looking out from a door the like of

that door, and seeing nothing but the mists rolling down the bog, and the mists again, and they rolling up the bog, and hearing nothing but the wind crying out in the bits of broken trees were left from the great storm, and the streams roaring with the rain.

MICHEAL (*looking at her uneasily*). What is it ails you, this night, Nora Burke? I 've heard tell it 's the like of that talk you do hear from men, and they after being a great while on the back hills.

NORA (*putting out the money on the table*). It 's a bad night, and a wild night, Micheal Dara, and isn't it a great while I am at the foot of the back hills, sitting up here boiling food for himself, and food for the brood sow, and baking a cake when the night falls? (*She puts up the money, listlessly, in little piles on the table.*) Isn't it a long while I am sitting here in the winter and the summer, and the fine spring, with the young growing behind me and the old passing, saying to myself one time, to look on Mary Brien who wasn't that height (*holding out her hand*), and I a fine girl growing up, and there she is now with two children, and another coming on her in three months or four (*she pauses*).

MICHEAL (*moving over three of the piles*). That 's three pounds we have now, Nora Burke.

NORA (*continuing in the same voice*). And saying to myself another time, to look on Peggy Cavanagh, who had the lightest hand at milking a cow that wouldn't be easy, or turning a cake, and there she is now walking round on the roads, or sitting in a dirty old house, with no teeth in her mouth, and no sense and no more hair than you 'ld see on a bit of a hill and they after burning the furze from it.

MICHEAL. That 's five pounds and ten notes, a good sum, surely! . . . It 's not that way you 'll be talking when you marry a young man, Nora Burke, and they were saying in the fair my lambs were the best lambs, and I got a grand price, for I 'm no fool now at making a bargain when my lambs are good.

NORA. What was it you got?

MICHEAL. Twenty pound for the lot, Nora Burke. . . . We 'ld do right to wait now till himself will be quiet awhile in the Seven Churches, and then you 'll marry me in the chapel of Rathvanna, and I 'll bring

the sheep up on the bit of a hill you have on the back mountain, and we won't have anything we 'ld be afeard to let our minds on when the mist is down.

NORA (*pouring him out some whisky*). Why would I marry you, Mike Dara? You 'll be getting old and I 'll be getting old, and in a little while I 'm telling you, you 'll be sitting up in your bed — the way himself was sitting — with a shake in your face, and your teeth falling, and the white hair sticking out round you like an old bush where sheep do be leaping a gap.

(*Dan Burke sits up noiselessly from under the sheet, with his hand to his face. His white hair is sticking out round his head.*)

NORA (*goes on slowly without hearing him*). It 's a pitiful thing to be getting old, but it 's a queer thing surely. It 's a queer thing to see an old man sitting up there in his bed with no teeth in him, and a rough word in his mouth, and his chin the way it would take the bark from the edge of an oak board you 'ld have building a door. . . . God forgive me, Micheal Dara, we 'll all be getting old, but it 's a queer thing surely.

MICHEAL. It 's too lonesome you are

from living a long time with an old man, Nora, and you're talking again like a herd that would be coming down from the thick mist (*he puts his arm round her*), but it's a fine life you'll have now with a young man, a fine life surely. . . . (*Dan sneezes violently. Micheal tries to get to the door, but before he can do so, Dan jumps out of the bed in queer white clothes, with his stick in his hand, and goes over and puts his back against it.*)

MICHEAL. Son of God deliver us. (*Crosses himself, and goes backward across the room.*)

DAN (*holding up his hand at him*). Now you'll not marry her the time I'm rotting below in the Seven Churches, and you'll see the thing I'll give you will follow you on the back mountains when the wind is high.

MICHEAL (*to Nora*). Get me out of it, Nora, for the love of God. He always did what you bid him, and I'm thinking he would do it now.

NORA (*looking at the Tramp*). Is it dead he is or living?

DAN (*turning towards her*). It's little you

care if it 's dead or living I am, but there 'll be an end now of your fine times, and all the talk you have of young men and old men, and of the mist coming up or going down. (*He opens the door.*) You 'll walk out now from that door, Nora Burke, and it 's not to-morrow, or the next day, or any day of your life, that you 'll put in your foot through it again.

TRAMP (*standing up*). It 's a hard thing you 're saying for an old man, master of the house, and what would the like of her do if you put her out on the roads?

DAN. Let her walk round the like of Peggy Cavanagh below, and be begging money at the cross-road, or selling songs to the men. (*To Nora.*) Walk out now, Nora Burke, and it 's soon you 'll be getting old with that life, I 'm telling you; it 's soon your teeth 'll be falling and your head 'll be the like of a bush where sheep do be leaping a gap. (*He pauses: she looks round at Micheal.*)

MICHEAL (*timidly*). There 's a fine Union below in Rathdrum.

DAN. The like of her would never go there. . . . It 's lonesome roads she 'll be

going and hiding herself away till the end will come, and they find her stretched like a dead sheep with the frost on her, or the big spiders, maybe, and they putting their webs on her, in the butt of a ditch.

NORA (*angrily*). What way will yourself be that day, Daniel Burke? What way will you be that day and you lying down a long while in your grave? For it 's bad you are living, and it 's bad you 'll be when you 're dead. (*She looks at him a moment fiercely, then half turns away and speaks plaintively again.*) Yet, if it is itself, Daniel Burke, who can help it at all, and let you be getting up into your bed, and not be taking your death with the wind blowing on you, and the rain with it, and you half in your skin.

DAN. It 's proud and happy you 'ld be if I was getting my death the day I was shut of yourself. (*Pointing to the door.*) Let you walk out through that door, I 'm telling you, and let you not be passing this way if it 's hungry you are, or wanting a bed.

TRAMP (*pointing to Micheal*). Maybe himself would take her.

NORA. What would he do with me now?

TRAMP. Give you the half of a dry bed, and good food in your mouth.

DAN. Is it a fool you think him, stranger, or is it a fool you were born yourself? Let her walk out of that door, and let you go along with her, stranger — if it 's raining itself — for it 's too much talk you have surely.

TRAMP (*going over to Nora*). We 'll be going now, lady of the house — the rain is falling, but the air is kind and maybe it 'll be a grand morning by the grace of God.

NORA. What good is a grand morning when I 'm destroyed surely, and I going out to get my death walking the roads?

TRAMP. You 'll not be getting your death with myself, lady of the house, and I knowing all the ways a man can put food in his mouth. . . . We 'll be going now, I 'm telling you, and the time you 'll be feeling the cold, and the frost, and the great rain, and the sun again, and the south wind blowing in the glens, you 'll not be sitting up on a wet ditch, the way you 're after sitting in the place, making yourself old with looking on each day, and it passing you by. You 'll be saying one time, " It 's a grand evening,

by the grace of God," and another time, "It 's a wild night, God help us, but it 'll pass surely." You 'll be saying —

DAN (*goes over to them crying out impatiently*). Go out of that door, I 'm telling you, and do your blathering below in the glen.

(*Nora gathers a few things into her shawl.*)

TRAMP (*at the door*). Come along with me now, lady of the house, and it 's not my blather you 'll be hearing only, but you 'll be hearing the herons crying out over the black lakes, and you 'll be hearing the grouse and the owls with them, and the larks and the big thrushes when the days are warm, and it 's not from the like of them you 'll be hearing a talk of getting old like Peggy Cavanagh, and losing the hair off you, and the light of your eyes, but it 's fine songs you 'll be hearing when the sun goes up, and there 'll be no old fellow wheezing, the like of a sick sheep, close to your ear.

NORA. I 'm thinking it 's myself will be wheezing that time with lying down under the Heavens when the night is cold; but you 've a fine bit of talk, stranger, and it 's with yourself I 'll go. (*She goes towards the*

door, then turns to Dan.) You think it's a grand thing you're after doing with your letting on to be dead, but what is it at all? What way would a woman live in a lonesome place the like of this place, and she not making a talk with the men passing? And what way will yourself live from this day, with none to care for you? What is it you'll have now but a black life, Daniel Burke, and it's not long I'm telling you, till you'll be lying again under that sheet, and you dead surely.

(*She goes out with the Tramp. Micheal is slinking after them, but Dan stops him.*)

DAN. Sit down now and take a little taste of the stuff, Micheal Dara. There's a great drouth on me, and the night is young.

MICHEAL (*coming back to the table*). And it's very dry I am, surely, with the fear of death you put on me, and I after driving mountain ewes since the turn of the day.

DAN (*throwing away his stick*). I was thinking to strike you, Micheal Dara, but you're a quiet man, God help you, and I don't mind you at all.

(*He pours out two glasses of whisky, and gives one to Micheal.*)

DAN. Your good health, Micheal Dara.

MICHEAL. God reward you, Daniel Burke, and may you have a long life, and a quiet life, and good health with it.

(*They drink.*)

CURTAIN.

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NOTE

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The Bibelot

IN *that most fascinating book*, Letters on Literature, (*1889,*) *Andrew Lang has this to say concerning Robert Bridges:*

"*The name of Mr. Robert Bridges is probably strange to many lovers of poetry who would like nothing better than to make acquaintance with his verse. But his verse is not so easily found. This poet never writes in magazines; his books have not appealed to the public by any sort of advertisement, only two or three of them have come forth in the regular way. . . . I have named Mr. Bridges here because his poems are probably all but unknown to readers well acquainted with many other English writers of late days. On them, especially on actual contemporaries or juniors in age, it would be almost impertinent for me to speak to you; but, even at that risk, I take the chance of directing you to the poetry of Mr. Bridges. I owe so much pleasure to its delicate air, that, if speech be impertinence, silence were ingratitude.*"

A quarter of a century has elapsed and the name which Andrew Lang thought was so little known has of a sudden become famous.

It may be considered a happy accident, which can neither add to nor take away from what Robert Bridges has achieved, that only a few weeks ago was conferred upon him the highest honour Great Britain can officially offer an Englishman of letters. If the late Prof. Dowden was one of the earliest to appreciate him,[1] *Mr. John Bailey in* The Quarterly Review *for July last is the latest to confirm that critical estimate which Dowden was first to express. It seems to be agreed that Bridges is a poet's poet,—for the man in the street, a very sufficient evidence of his negligible quality. For when all is said it is definitely certain that Dr. Bridges must from the nature of things remain as caviare to the general; a fact as clearly implied in Arthur Symons' study*[2] *here reprinted as in the cancelled essay by Lionel Johnson, elsewhere given by us.*[3]

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1 *See* The Poetry of Robert Bridges *in* Fortnightly Review *for July, 1894.*

2 *See* Studies in Prose and Verse *by Arthur Symons London n. d.* [*1904.*] *First printed in* The Monthly Review *for July, 1901.*

3 *We say "cancelled" because of the following statement in Mr. Thomas Whittemore's preface,* (*p. ix*) *to* Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers *by Lionel Johnson,* (*London, 1911*): *"If the brilliant early* Hobby-Horse *critique upon Mr. Robert Bridges be missed from this volume, the*

After reading these essays it may occur to some of us that the journalism of to-day is scarcely worth considering so far as any new or true ideas of Bridges are concerned. Doubtless it is of interest to learn on such authority that the new laureate is both gentleman and scholar, and that Mr. Asquith made no mistake in his selection although many aspirants could have been chosen, whose names are much more to the front. Notwithstanding the chorus of indolent reviewers who never tire of assuring us how little known Dr. Bridges really is, we may at least point out that his merits were set forth in these pages so long ago as 1897. Still earlier, in 1894, The Growth of Love, *his superb sonnet sequence, was reprinted by us though with scarcely an acknowledgement in the literary journals then or since. Indeed, to a genuine lover of poetry it is*

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reasons are to be found in Mr. Johnson's own letters in The Athenæum *dated June 1 and July 18, 1896." As a matter of fact these letters were printed in* The Academy *for June 6, July 18, and 25, 1896. One of them was by Mr. Mosher who had the temerity to reprint this article as an introduction to his edition of* The Growth of Love, *(1894,) and who now defended its use against the angry attempt at self-effacement by its brilliant but, in this instance, seemingly irresponsible author. Why, if you must "fish the murex up," Mr. Whittemore, did you not give the facts with accuracy?*

very old news that Robert Bridges was from the start, in 1873, when his first book of Poems appeared, a poet of distinction. His lyrics and sonnets first and foremost, and his gifts as a critic of the highest rank in dealing with the texts of Milton and of Keats: all of it is work of rare excellence whereon our memory and joy of him will longest endure.

A sonnet written by Mr. Maurice Hewlett, addressed To The Poet Laureate *makes clear, at one and the same time, the limitations and the excellence of his subject:*

Not clamor nor the buzzing of the crowd,
Bridges, beset the lonely way you took;
The mountain path, the laurel-shelter'd nook,
The upland peak earth-hidden in a cloud.
The skyey places — here your spirit proud
Could meet its peers, the lowland rout forsook;
Here were your palimpsest and singing-book,
Here scope and silence, singing-robe and shroud.
Let England learn of thee her ancient way
Long time forgot: the glory of the swift
Is swiftness, not acclaim, and to the strong
The joy of battle battle's meed. Thy song
Will call no clearer, nor less surely lift
Our hearts to Beauty for thy crown of bay.

FOR OCTOBER:
THE POEMS OF MARY COLERIDGE
BY ROBERT BRIDGES

ROBERT BRIDGES:
AN ESSAY
By
ARTHUR SYMONS.

NIGHTINGALES

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

MR. BRIDGES appears to me, in his "Shorter Poems," to be alone in our time as a writer of purely lyric poetry, poetry which aims at being an "embodied joy," a calm rapture. Others have concerned themselves with passions more vehement, with thoughts more profound, with a wilder music, a more variable colour; others have been romantic, realistic, classical, and tumultuous; have brought a remote magic into verse, and have made verse out of sorrowful things close at hand. But while all these men have been singing themselves, and what they have counted most individual in themselves, this man has put into his verse only what remains over when all the others have finished. It is a kind of essence; it is what is imperishable in perfume; it is what is nearest in words to silence. Of the writer of "Will love again awake," or "I love all beauteous things," you know no more than you know of the writer of "Kind are her answers," or of "O Love, they wrong thee much," in the Elizabethan song-books. You know only that joy has come harmoniously into a soul, which, for the moment at least,

has been purged of everything less absolute than the sheer responsiveness of song. And so, better than the subtlest dramatist, the lyric poet, in his fine, self-sacrificing simplicity, can speak for all the world, scarcely even knowing that he is speaking for himself at all. And in this poetry, it should be noted, nothing is allowed for its own sake, not even the most seductive virtue, as pathos, the ecstasy of love or of religion; but everything for the sake of poetry. Here is an artist so scrupulous that beauty itself must come only in sober apparel, joy only walking temperately, sorrow without the private disfiguring of tears. Made, as it is, out of what might be the commonplace, if it were not the most select thing in the world; written, as it is, with a deliberateness which might be cold if it were not at that quiet heat in which rapture is no longer astonished at itself; realising, as it does, Coleridge's requirement that "poetry in its higher and purer sense" should demand "continuous admiration, not regular recurrence of conscious surprise;" this poetry, more than almost any in English, is art for art's sake; and it shows, better certainly than any other,

how that formula saves from excess, rather than induces to it. So evenly are form and substance set over against one another that it might be said, with as much or as little justice, that everything exists for form, or that nothing is sacrificed to it.

Listen, for instance, to a song which gives us Mr. Bridges at his best:

"I have loved flowers that fade,
Within whose magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents.
A honeymoon delight,—
A joy of love at sight,
That ages in an hour:—
My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
Before their charm is writ
Along a liquid sky
Trembling to welcome it.
Notes, that with pulse of fire
Proclaim the spirit's desire,
Then die, and are nowhere:—
My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom:
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
'T was thine love's tender sense

> To feast; now on thy bier
> Beauty shall shed a tear."

Technique in the writing of a song which shall be simply a song, and in the purity and subtlety of style, can go no further; every word seems to be chosen for its beauty, and yet, if we look into it, is chosen equally for its precision; every word sings, and yet says what it means, as clearly as if it had no musical notes to attend to. And here, as elsewhere in Mr. Bridges' work, every epithet has at once originality and distinction, a gentlemanly air of ease at finding itself where it is, though in a society wholly new to it. "Magic tents," for the enveloping petals of a flower; the word "unmemoried," used of scents, to which it is common to attribute the memories they awaken or recall in human minds; "faint attire of frightened fire," used of the palm willow in spring; the vision of "uncanopied sleep flying from field and tree" at dawn; the "astonisht" Saracen, whom the Crusader, before

> "His hands by death were charm'd
> To leave his sword at rest,"

crossed the sea to send into hell; the "soft unchristen'd smile" of Eros: all these unusual and inevitable epithets, each an act of the imagination, sharp, unerring, but never surprising, seem to unite in themselves just those contrary qualities which should combine to make perfect style in verse. Mr. Meredith, caring mostly for originality, invents for every noun an adjective which has never run in harness with it, and which champs and rears intractably at its side. Mr. Swinburne, preferring what goes smoothly to what comes startlingly from a distance, chooses his epithets for their sound and for their traditional significance, their immediate appeal, sensuous or intellectual. Mr. Bridges obtains his delicate, evasively simple effects by coaxing beautiful, alien words to come together willingly, and take service with him, as if they had been born under his care.

Unlike most poets, Mr. Bridges is a cultivated musician, and has, indeed, twice written the "book of words" for music: once for Sir Villiers Stanford's oratorio, "Eden," and once, in the form of a Purcell Ode, for the setting of Sir Hubert Parry. Neither

experiment is altogether fortunate, but the study of music has taught Mr. Bridges what the daily practice of it taught the song-writers of the age of Elizabeth: a delicate, and in time instinctive, sense of the musical value of words and syllables, the precise singing quality of rhythms, with all kinds of dainty tricks, which, if they come at all, can come only by some rare accident to the song-writer who is not a musician. To Mr. Bridges it is part of his science, of his equipment as an artist. I doubt if many of his effects, irresponsible as they often come to seem, have come to him in his sleep; it is almost a point of honour with him, the artist's scrupulous honour, to know beforehand what he is going to do, and to do it precisely as he decides upon doing it.

Mr. Bridges' style in verse has been said to lack originality, and it is true that his finest lyrics might have found their place among the lyrics in an Elizabethan song-book. And yet they are not archaic, a going back to the external qualities of style, but a thinking back, as of one who really, in thought, lives in another age, to which his temper of mind is more akin. They are

very personal, but personal in a way so abstract, so little dependent on the accidents of what we call personality, that it seems the most natural thing in the world for him to turn to a style which comes to him with a great, anonymous tradition. He has never had that somewhat prosaic desire to paint himself "with all the warts," and he is quite indifferent to the self-consciousness which goes by the name of originality. Just as, in his plays, he borrows frankly from any one who deals in his own merchandise, so in his lyrics he tries to write only what might have been written in any time or in any country. In the note to "Achilles in Scyros" we read: "One passage in my play (I 518 and foll.) is an imitation of Calderon; but this is after Muley's well-known speech in the *Principe Constante*, which is quoted in most books on Calderon." He seems almost impersonal in his work, indifferent whose it is, his own or another's, as if only its excellence interested him. And this work, when it is most narrowly personal, does not so much render moods of a temperament as aspects of a character. Nobility of character, a moral largeness, which becomes one

with an intellectual breadth, a certain gravity, simplicity, sincerity: these count for so much in his work, which indeed they seem to make. Here is a poem, strangely named "The Affliction of Richard," which gives us, with spare dignity, all this side of Mr. Bridges' work:

"Love not too much. But how,
When thou hast made me such,
And dost thy gifts bestow,
How can I love too much?
Though I must fear to lose,
And drown my joy in care,
With all its thorns I choose
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,
Didst kill my childish trust,
That breach with toil did I
Repair, because I must:
And spite of frighting schemes,
With which the fiends of Hell
Blaspheme thee in my dreams,
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,
What marvel in me wrought
Shall quite exculpate thee,
I have no shadow of thought.
What am I that complain?
The love, from which began
My question sad and vain,
Justifies thee to man."

There are no heats of passion, no out-cries, but an equable sensitiveness to fine emotions; a kind of brooding, almost continual ecstasy, the quietest ecstasy known to me in poetry. He demands, and seems to attain,

> "Simple enjoyment calm in its excess,
> With not a grief to cloud, and not a ray
> Of passion overhot my peace to oppress;
> With no ambition to reproach delay,
> Nor rapture to disturb my happiness."

But, among all these suave negatives, he finds or makes for himself an astringent quality of austere self-control. It is with a kind of religious fervour, as of one expressing an old, settled belief, that he says, in perhaps his best-known lyric:

> "I love all beauteous things,
> I seek and adore them:
> God hath no better praise,
> And man in his hasty days
> Is honoured for them.
>
> I too will something make
> And joy in the making;
> Altho' to-morrow it seem
> Like the empty words of a dream
> Remembered on waking."

Made, as it is, on so firm a basis of a character, his art is concerned with results rather than (as with most lyric poets) with processes. How many of his poems seem to lead from meditation straight to action; to be expressing something more definite, more formed and settled, than a feeling divorced from consequences! When, as so often, he finds words for an almost inarticulate delight, it is, for the most part, no accidental but rather an organic delight to which he gives utterance: the response of nature to his nature, of his nature to nature.

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of subtlety endeavours to come in. Mr. Bridges' poetic heat is intermittent, and thus his felicity; for all charm in verse, however "frail and careful," is born of some energy at white heat. At rare times, even in the short poems, and not only in so long a poem as, for instance, "Prometheus the

Firegiver," one feels that the wave of thought or emotion does not flow broadly and strongly to the end, but breaks on the way. And so the plays, with all their meditative and lyrical beauty, their quaint, delicate dialogue, a grave playing with love and life, a serious trifling, bookish and made for an artist's pleasure, remain, for the most part, interesting experiments, not achievements. Singularly insubstantial things, spun out of gossamer, a web of dainty thoughts and song-like meditations about passion, with a somewhat uncertain humour spinning it, they seem to have been made for the sake of making them, as a poet might write Latin verses.

By the way one finds all manner of delightful things, unsubstantial things, things which seem unessential, but which, all the same, have an enchantment and a wisdom of their own. There is always delight in reading any verse which Mr. Bridges writes, however he writes it; it will have something at least of the unseizable form of poetry; that is to say, of the true spirit of poetry. He thinks in verse; he writes verse learnedly and instinctively. Ordinary things when he says

them take on a gravity which is not the gravity of even the best prose; they have air about them, and they sing out of the air. The words in these plays are for the most part very simple, the things said are very simple; but beauty is rarely absent from them. Often enough it is a beauty of mere adjustment; the ordinary appropriate thing is said fittingly. Only occasionally does any exceptional beauty come into the work, from which, indeed, it seems to be deliberately excluded. Part of the charming, disconcerting manner of the plays consists in precisely this ordinary unemphatic manner of writing, this poetry which would be so very near prose if it were not something wholly different. Mr. Bridges will not indulge himself or you; there are no baits for attention, no splendours or violences, not much passion, not much emotion, not a very vivid or active life. You are to resign yourself to a somewhat lulling spell; you must dream to the end, otherwise the entertainment is closed to you.

The fact is that Mr. Bridges can only reach his highest point of intensity in the lyric, not in the play. These twilight char-

acters who take distracting events gently, and can moralise on them as bookish people would at the moment of their happening (sometimes condensing the essence of the situation into a few lovely undramatic lines), have in them but little of the life-blood which went to the making of the best of the "Shorter Poems." The genius of Mr. Bridges is reticent, exquisitely unemphatic. Drama is all emphasis, of a kind; emphasis which it is, indeed, the dramatist's art to suspend, not to exclude. Mr. Bridges has no emphasis in his dramas; he writes them as he writes his lyrics, treating the stage much as he has treated metre. He has turned metre into his own ways; he has drawn out of it his own music, which comes to us through the plays like violin music written out for a full orchestra.

In the two parts of "Nero," not intended for the stage, as most of the other plays are, we find, perhaps, the nearest approach to what is essentially drama, in characters and subject-matter. In "The Return of Ulysses," where the framework and part of the substance are ready made in Homer, and in "Achilles in Scyros," which is full of

happy poetry, not twisted into some childish shape for the mere ingenuity of the twisting, we find a more continuous quality of charm than in the other plays, with merits less purely technical. But even in these it is beauty of detail, rather than structural beauty, which appeals to us; and, in these as in the other plays, we remember single lines and passages rather than either characters or situations.

"Prometheus" returns to me in these lines:

> "I see the cones
> And needles of the fir, which by the wind
> In melancholy places ceaselessly
> Sighing are strewn upon the tufted floor;"

"Achilles" in such lines as

> "that old god
> Whose wisdom buried in the deep hath made
> The unfathomed water solemn,"

or

> "questioning the high decrees
> By which the sweetly tyrannous stars allot
> Their lives and deaths to men;"

and "The Humours of the Court" characterises itself in the wholly undramatic picture-making of this beautiful speech:

"All this hour
I have seemed in Paradise: and the fair prospect
Hath quieted my spirit: I think I sail
Into the windless haven of my life
To-day with happy omens: as the stir
And sleep-forbidding rattle of the journey
Was like my life till now. Here all is peace:
The still fresh air of this October morning,
With its resigning odours; the rich hues
Wherein the gay leaves revel to their fall;
The deep blue sky; the misty distances,
And splashing fountains; and I thought I heard
A magic service of meandering music
Threading the glades and stealing on the lawns."

"Eros and Psyche," a narrative after Apuleius, has the coldness of work done, however sympathetically, as task-work, and is but half alive. Like the plays, it is an experiment, one of the learned, laborious diversions of the scholar who is part of this poet.

In the sixty-nine sonnets, called "The Growth of Love," we find another kind of experiment. Here Mr. Bridges plays solemn variations on the theme which is, he tells us,

"My contemplation and perpetual thought."

Every sonnet has a calm, temperate skill of its own; some of the sonnets come to us

with precisely the accent of the lyrics; some might be belated Elizabethan sonnets; others translations from early Italian poetry; others, as here, have almost the note of Milton:

"The dark and serious angel, who so long
Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,
Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong,
Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
God's purpose in a soul of such degree;
And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay,
And work confusion of so many foes:
The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,
Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes
Unto what great reward I can not say."

But with all this fine skill, this serious and interesting substance, even these sonnets are work which is not Mr. Bridges' real work. They are written around a subject, they do not give inevitable words to that love to which they are consecrated. As we read each sonnet we say: How fine this is! and when we have read them all we say: How fine they all are! The poet who, in

his lyrics, seems to speak for all the world, telling every one some intimate secret which has never whispered itself before, speaks now for himself, and finds himself unconsciously generalising. He seems to repeat only what others have said before him; admirable things, to which he adds the belief of experience, but with no quickening of the pulses.

The exact filling of a given form has always been one of the main preoccupations of this artist, as it should be of every artist. And it is not necessary to read Mr. Bridges' treatise on the prosody of Milton to realise how completely he has apprehended everything that is to his purpose in the science of verse. Limiting himself, indeed, far less than Coventry Patmore, Mr. Bridges has somewhat the same resoluteness in subordinating technique to style. His verse has a unity of effect, so carefully prolonged that only by reading attentively do you discover the elaboration of this severe, simple, unemphatic verse, in which a most learned and complex variety of cadence is used to support, with adornment, indeed, but with no weak or distracting adornment, the single

structure. Where many artists have the air of offering you their choicest things with a certain (what shall I say?) emphasis, as if calling your attention to what you might possibly overlook, Mr. Bridges, when he is most lavish, uses the most disguise, and would gladly pass off upon you his gold coin as if it were a counter. It is all the modesty of his pride: be assured that he knows the worth of his gold far better than you do.

In one of his sonnets Mr. Bridges has told us very clearly what it is that he aims at, and what he refrains from, in his work. Let us take him at his word:

> "I live on hope and that I think do all
> Who come into this world, and since I see
> Myself in swim with such good company,
> I take my comfort whatsoe'er befall.
> I abide and abide, as if more stout and tall
> My spirit would grow by waiting like a tree;
> And, clear of others' toil, it pleaseth me
> In dreams their quick ambition to forestall.
>
> And if thro' careless eagerness I slide
> To some accomplishment, I give my voice
> Still to desire, and in desire abide.
> I have no stake abroad; if I rejoice
> In what is done or doing, I confide
> Neither to friend nor foe my secret choice."

"The art that most I loved, but little used," he says, speaking of poetry, and contrasts himself with those of his friends who have sought positive attainments,

"While I love beauty, and was born to rhyme."

He wraps a haughty indifference round him like a mantle, not without some of that sensitiveness which resents praise no less than censure, because it demands acceptance, unquestioning homage, rather than even so much equality as the man who praises must claim towards the man whose worth he has weighed before praising. Mr. Bridges takes some pains to impress upon us that he is something more than a poet, and that, even in so far as he is a poet, he is not wholly at our service. In another sonnet he tells us what select kind of immortality he chooses to desire for himself:

"O my uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
That in my secret book with so much care
I write you, this one here and that one there,
Marking the time and order of your birth?
How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth,
A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
Look ye for any welcome anywhere
From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

> Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd
> To write you such as once, when I was young,
> Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.
> 'T were something yet to live again among
> The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd
> My art, be there remembered for my song."

Even this reward, he seems to say to us, he can do without, reserving to himself his "joy in the making."

To Mr. Bridges, undoubtedly, there is something of an actual "joy" in making poetry, in the mere writing of verse. No one in our time has written verse more consciously and more learnedly, with a more thorough realisation of all those effects which are commonly supposed to come to poets by some divine accident. Moreover, he has thought out the question of English prosody in a way of his own, correcting, as it seems to me, certain errors of theorists, and correcting them upon a principle which has consciously or unconsciously been present to the best writers of English verse in all ages. I will quote from his book on Milton's prosody what seems to be the essential part of his theory:

> "Immediately English verse is written free from a numeration of syllables, it falls back on the number of

stresses as its determining law: that is its governing power, and constitutes its form; and this is a perfectly different system from that which counts the syllables It seems also the most natural to our language; and I think that the confusion which exists with regard to it is due to the fact that stress cannot be excluded from consideration even in verse that depends primarily on the number of syllables. The two systems are mixed in our tradition, and they must be separated before a prosody of stress can arise. But if once the notion be got rid of that you must have so many syllables in a line to make a verse, or must account for the supernumerary ones in some such manner as the Greeks or Latins would have done, then the stress will declare its supremacy, which, as may be seen in Shakespeare and Milton, it is burning to do. Now the primary law of pure stressed verse is, that there shall never be a conventional or imaginary stress: that is, *the verse cannot make the stress, because it is the stress that makes the verse.* . . . If the number of stresses in each line be fixed, and such a fixation would be the metre, and if the stresses be determined only by the language and its sense, and if the syllables which they have to carry do not overburden them, then every line may have a different rhythm; though so much variety is not of necessity. . . . I will only add that when English poets will write verse governed honestly by natural speech-stress, they will discover the laws for themselves, and will find open to them an infinite field of rhythm as yet untouched. There is nothing which may not be done in it, and it is perhaps not the least of its advantages that it is most difficult to do well."

All Mr. Bridges' work in verse is an illustration of this theory, and it is because this theory is, as he says, "too simple to be understood," that he has been accused of writing verse which is difficult to scan. Read verse for the sense (that is what he really says to us), and if the verse is correctly written the natural speech-emphasis will show you the rhythm. Take, for instance, the last of the "Shorter Poems." The last stanza reads:

> "Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away
> Deem, nor strange thy doom.
> Like this sorrow 'twill come,
> And the day will be to-day."

The first line of the poem reads:

> "Weep not to-day: why should this sadness be?"

a line which appears quite normal, from the conventional standpoint of syllables and according to a conventional accent. Yet what a surprising and altogether admirable variety is introduced into this metre by the first line which I have quoted from the last stanza! Read it according to the rules by which, we are commonly taught, English verse is governed, and it is incorrect, scarcely

a verse at all. Read for the sense, say it as you would say it if it were prose, and you were speaking it without thinking about accents or syllables, and its correct ease, its legitimate beauty, its unforced expressiveness, reveal themselves to you at once. At times Mr. Bridges does not trust his own words enough, and puts needless accents on them, as in the poem which begins with the wavering and delicate line:

"The storm is over, the land hushes to rest,"

where he prints the last line but one in this barbarous way:

"Sée! sléep hath fallen: the trees are asleep."

That line needs but to be read, like all the others, for its sense, with the natural pauses of the voice, and it cannot be read wrongly. It is only in one point that Mr. Bridges seems to me inconsistent with his own theory, in which natural speech is so rightly accepted as the test and standard of verse. He admits, as in the lines I have quoted, inversions which would be impossible in natural speech:

"nor far away
Deem, nor strange thy doom."

Now an inversion for the sake of rhyme or rhythm is as bad as a conventional accent, is indeed an inexcusable blemish in a poem written frankly in the language of to-day, and presenting itself to us with so familiar a simplicity. It is a "poetic licence," and for poetic licences poetry, at all events modern poetry, has no room.

If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance. This poet, collectedly living apart, to whom the common rewards of life are not so much as a temptation, has meditated deeply on the conduct of life, in the freest, most universal sense; and he has attained a philosophy of austere, not unsmiling content, in which something of the cheerfulness of the Stoic unites with the more melancholy resignation of the Christian; and, limiting himself so resolutely to this sober outlook upon life, though with a sense of the whole wisdom of the ages:

> "Then oft I turn the page
> In which our country's name,
> Spoiling the Greek of fame,
> Shall sound in every age:
> Or some Terentian play
> Renew, whose excellent
> Adjusted folds betray
> How once Menander went:"

limiting himself, as in his verse, to a moderation which is an infinite series of rejections, he becomes the wisest of living poets, as he is artistically the most faultless. He has left by the way all the fine and coloured and fantastic and splendid things which others have done their utmost to attain, and he has put into his poetry the peace and not the energies of life, the wisdom and not the fever of love, the silences rather than the voices of nature. His whole work is a telling of secrets, and they are told so subtly that you too must listen to overhear them, as he has been listening, all his life, to the almost inaudible voices of those "flames of the soul" which are the desire and the promise of eternal beauty.

The Bibelot

THERE *appear to be some misgivings in the appraisals of Dr. Robert Bridges that have come to hand. He does not utter in his sonnets "a passionate heart-cry such as one reads in Shakespeare, brooding over his dark lady, nor a piercing note such as Mrs. Browning gives us, nor a sensuous lovely passage such as we find in Rossetti." No, indeed, none of these things are to be found. But what about Wordsworth or our own Dr. Parsons? And would "heart cries" or "piercing notes" or "sensuous loveliness" be required of any one of these three poets?*

Turning to Dr. Bridges as critic we find an essay by him on The Poems of Mary Coleridge, *printed in the* Cornhill Magazine *for November 1907, and it appealed to us as a good example of what could be said in commendation of a woman poet, whose affinities to his own serene angel of Poesy are so much in evidence. It is quite true that* Fancy's Following *was reprinted by us in 1900, and found "none to praise and very few to love." Strange is it not? One has to wait till death take the poet, which makes*

one wonder if even dying will give to the rare spirits masked under the pseudonym of "Michael Field" their meed of overdue and unrendered praise. When plays of such fine flavour as The Tragic Mary, *lyrics of loveliness as in* Underneath the Bough, *transfusions of the soul of Greek Sappho as seen in* Long Ago *can be brought to birth only to fall into neglect, how shall we expect Mary Elizabeth Coleridge to find and keep her audience?*

Nevertheless she, or rather her friends who loved her, did *accomplish what the two brilliantly gifted women of genius have not yet achieved. How this came about Dr. Bridges in part reveals to us, and in Miss Sichel's beautiful memoir prefixed to* Gathered Leaves from the Prose of Mary E. Coleridge (*London, 1910*) *we are told still more. It must have been a heaven-sent boon that made her known to the author of* Ionica[1] *— still another of the group who live secluded and solitary and leave great verse unto a little clan!*

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[1] *She made the acquaintance of William Cory at the age of thirteen, and her Notes of his Table Talk are given in full in* Gathered Leaves, *pp. 285-336. See also* The Bibelot, *Vol. VII, pp. 119-154, containing* Lyrics from Ionica, *and a short account of Cory by Mr. Thomas J. Wise.*

Of these Mary Coleridge was perhaps the most human. Her novels are apparently forgotten, her essays and stories possibly lack "artistic verisimilitude," but just her brief lyrics as given in Fancy's Following *and in the* Collected Poems *survive and speak — some of them in undying tones — to the heart.*

As she once wrote to a friend, "Birthdays now seem to me to be like the lamp-posts along a road, when you are nearing the end of a long, dark, delicious drive, and however tired you may be, are still absolutely uninclined to make the effort of getting out of the comfortable home of a carriage, and settling yourself in a new house. I like temporary conditions, and the freedom of them. I can hardly remember any drive — even to the house of celestial people — to the end of which I was not sorry to come, for the moment. And 'Forever' is such a big house. Not that I think like this always or often. For the most part, I don't remember my own getting old at all, other people's getting older is so much worse."

And so it came to pass that "the 'long, dark, delicious' journey is over and she has reached that 'big house' of rest. The chill autumn vapours will not reach her: she cannot grow old."

"There, in that other world, what waits for me?
What shall I find after that other birth?
No stormy, tossing, foaming, smiling sea,
But a new earth.

No sun to mark the changing of the days,
No slow soft falling of the alternate night,
No moon, no star, no light upon my ways,
Only the Light.

No gray cathedral, wide and wondrous fair,
That I may tread where all my fathers trod.
Nay, nay, my soul, no house of God is there,
But only God."

A final wish, expressed in the last verse of these Poems, *has a note of poignant expectancy:*

"Some in a child would live, some in a book;
When I am dead let there remain of me
Less than a word — a little passing look,
Some sign the soul had once, ere she forsook
The form of life to live eternally."

FOR NOVEMBER:

THREE ESSAYS BY CHARLES LAMB

I. OLD CHINA.
II. DREAM-CHILDREN.
III. THE CHILD ANGEL.

THE POEMS OF MARY COLERIDGE
By
ROBERT BRIDGES.

O Earth, my mother! not upon thy breast
Would I my heavy head in death recline,
Would I lay down these weary limbs of mine
When the great Voice shall call me into rest.
Too well have I obeyed thy gay behest,
Too eagerly have worshipped at thy shrine;
The better part of all my life was thine,
I used thee as a lover not a guest.
I would not make with thee my dying bed,
Low, low beneath thy lowest let me be;
Far from thy living, farther from thy dead,
From every fetter of remembrance free,
Deep in some ocean cave, and overhead
The ceaseless sounding of thy waves, O Sea!

MARY E. COLERIDGE.

THE POEMS OF MARY COLERIDGE.

MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE, who died unexpectedly about two months ago, [August, 1907,] after a few days of acute illness, is very widely mourned.[1] Her personality was one of those rare combinations of character and intellect whose presence is everywhere beneficent and welcome; nor among all whom she comforted, instructed, encouraged, or amused will there be any who can think of her with more sorrow than is inseparable from mortality. We may imagine how elegantly a Latin epitaph might indulge the superlatives of its Ciceronian solicitude lest the good should be interrèd with her bones; it is better to think how her fragment of life, a good seed of beauty, imperishable as any link of physical cause and effect, must live on by the law which writes our fates in eternity.

But of the little ships that she built and launched, how long will any one of them float on the surging deluge of literature? I am not surprised that some of her friends have already hoisted her flag on the poems;

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1 She was born in September, 1861, and consequently was in her forty-sixth year when she died.

for, though the fact was generally unknown or neglected, Mary Coleridge was a poetess. It was "Fancy's Following," a dainty volume of forty-eight short lyrics, privately printed by Mr. Daniel in 1896, that first won her adequate recognition, and gave her real distinction as a writer. His one hundred and twenty-five copies, however, must have been distributed almost entirely among her personal friends and the collectors of rare books. In the following year she was persuaded to reprint some of these poems in Mr. Elkin Mathews' "Shilling Garland;" but this second venture, in which a few new poems appeared, met with so little favour in the market that not half of the edition of "Fancy's Guerdon," as she named it, has sold out in ten years, and the book may still be purchased in Vigo Street for twelve pence.

The delicate harmony of special excellences that makes originality, if it does not at once fascinate, is likely by its very strangeness to embarrass the judgment of even a professional connoisseur; and there is no other account to be given of the neglect of these poems, for they are both

beautiful and original, and often exhibit imagination of a very rare kind, conveyed by the identical expression of true feeling and artistic insight. Indeed I have seen it asserted that of all her distinguished family Mary Elizabeth was the one who alone inherited any share of the magic faculty which fruited in "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner," nor is the contention absurd. It is likely enough that the smallness of the volume affected the opinion of its importance; and yet forty-eight lyrics, maintaining so high a standard as these, will not he deemed a trifling performance.

They have already proved their vitality by usurping the favoured place in many families where they are known. They were selected from a much larger number, among which were others worthy to rank with them; but the hope of Mary Coleridge's admirers is that, since she wrote continuously to the end of her life, the promised selection from her complete work will be of considerable bulk, and secure her a high position among English lyrical poets.

Besides her bold and somewhat capricious imagination, with its natural and simple

expression, the qualities which Mary Coleridge brought to her poetry, so far as I can analyse or tabulate them, were a great literary appetite, knowledge, and memory — a wide sympathy, tenderness of feeling, and profound spirituality — and a humour without which such seriousness and devotion of life as were hers can hardly be made palatable in literature. Her humour was almost superabundant, and in her social life supplied deep roots to that luxuriant merriment and fun which brightly coloured all her conversation and letters when there was nothing to forbid their play.

She was in no sense a blue-stocking. She did not write poems because she had learned the grammar of verse, nor because she thought she had valuable moral lessons for well-intentioned people. Her poetry is the irrepressible song of a fancy whose vagaries she would have thought it impertinent to analyse; and, although these records of her soul were so sacred to her that she would hardly show them to her most intimate friends, she did not appear to set any great value on them. They are at once sincere and mysterious, so that "Fancy's

Following" is apt to give a reader the impression that its author had some desperate life-secret for the spring of her inspiration, and that she would reveal it only in enigma.

> I have forged me in seven-fold heats
> A shield from foes and lovers,
> And no one knows the heart that beats
> Beneath the shield that covers.

If I had met with that in Heine's "Buch der Lieder," I think I should have noted it for its excellence, certainly not have distinguished it for difference; and the same might be said of some other lyrics in this book; but most of those that recall Heine's manner add something to it. The following poem is called

A MOMENT.

> The clouds had made a crimson crown
> Above the mountains high,
> The stormy sun was going down
> In a stormy sky.
>
> Why did you let your eyes so rest on me,
> And hold your breath between?
> In all the ages this can never be
> As if it had not been.

These quotations will justify the inevitable reference to Heine, and there are other points of contact where Miss Coleridge will sustain some comparison; but it must be understood that she was not in any way a copyist or imitator of Heine; nor was she more comparable with him in conscious artistic fabrication than in spiritual likeness. Heine's file was as full of genius as his soul, so that, like Beethoven, the more he retouched his work the nearer it approached the perfect ease of spontaneity; and his attainment in his very best songs seems to show the boundary of what was possible in his material. His workmanship is so definite and clean and measured that the flaws appear as inevitable incommodities of the German language; he set himself above rivalry, and yet Mary Coleridge has often the same kind of masterful ease, while the facility with which his form adapts itself to varieties of mood and subject has also its counterpart in her work. To take only one well-marked class for example, I would cite the many poems which, like "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai," revivify and ethereal-ise the popular poetry of the fourteenth

century, with its everlasting topic of love and springtime, where the seasons are used as landscape for the elemental human passions, preserved to us in such *namenlose Lieder* as the following:

Ich wil trûren varen lân.
Uf die heide sul wir gân,
Ir wil liebe gespilen mîn:
Dâ seh wir der bluomen schîn.
Ich sage dir, ich sage dir,
Mîn geselle, kum mit mir.

Süeze Minne, râme mîn,
Mache mir ein krenzelîn:
Das sol tragen ein stolzer man,
Der wol wîben dienen kan.
Ich sage dir, ich sage dir,
Mîn geselle, kum mit mir.

In this universal type Miss Coleridge is equally modern, successful, and original. The last poem quoted from her is an example, but this is simpler:

When wintry winds are no more heard,
And joy 's in every bosom,
When summer sings in every bird,
And shines in every blossom,
When happy twilight hours are long,
Come home, my love, and think no wrong!

When berries gleam above the stream
And half the fields are yellow,

> Come back to me, my joyous dream,
> The world hath not thy fellow!
> And I will make thee Queen among
> The Queens of summer and of song.

And this same facility she exhibits in many varieties of matter; but, not to press the likeness further, it is just where Heine shows defect that Miss Coleridge is rich. If the shield which Heine forged to hide his heart was of finer workmanship than hers, it is not only because of its beauty that we do not desire to thrust it aside; and though it would be unjust to him to say that he is not spiritual, yet he is often contemptuous and infected with a cynicism — to use an old word in its modern sense — which is antagonistic to what is spiritual.

It may be difficult to say what the artistic requirements of modern poetry are or should be, but two things stand out, namely, the Greek attainment and the Christian ideal; and art which nowadays neglects either of these is imperfect; that is, it will not command our highest love, nor satisfy our best intelligence. Heine, I think, for all his incomparable beauty and tenderness, manifestly falls short of the Christian ideal.

Where, for instance, he proclaims himself *ein Ritter von dem Heiligen Geist*, though the metaphor correctly gives his meaning, and exactly serves his purpose, and is in a sense profoundly true, yet it is plain that in his mouth the expression loses all its glamour and the beauty proper to the idea. Compare the half-jocular self-assertion of his devotion to the good of mankind with the following:

> I may not call what many call divine,
> And yet my faith is faith in its degree;
> I worship at a dim and lonely shrine
> On bended knee.
>
> The secret grace of faith's celestial part
> I hoard up safely for my own self's own;
> Within the hidden chambers of my heart
> I love alone.

This poem, so far as the distinction has meaning, exhibits ideal rather than idealised love. It may be called a religious poem; but the attitude of the poetess is generally the same in poems which could not be called religious. Almost any one of her lyrics would illustrate it, but the following sonnet must be preferred here for the sake of its matter:

True to myself am I, and false to all.
Fear, sorrow, love, constrain us till we die.
But when the lips betray the spirit's cry,
The will, that should be sovereign, is a thrall.
Therefore let terror slay me, ere I call
For aid of men. Let grief begrudge a sigh.
"Are you afraid?—unhappy?" "No!" The lie
About the shrinking truth stands like a wall.
"And have you loved?" "No, never!" All the while
The heart within my flesh is turned to stone.
Yea, none the less that I account it vile,
The heart within my heart makes speechless moan;
And when they see one face, one face alone,
The stern eyes of the soul are moved to smile.

Her wide spiritual outlook is very like Dixon,[1] a poet so absolutely different from

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1 Richard Watson Dixon was a very unequal poet, but that does not affect the merit of his best work; it would be easy to make extracts from Shelley, or Wordsworth, or from Shakespeare himself to prove that they were no true poets. But how is it that "The Oxford Book of Verse" (1900), in spite of its curious catholicity, gives no poem of Dixon's? How was it that *The Golden Treasury* of 1861 contained no poem by Blake, whose *Songs of Innocence* was published in 1783? And its anthologist, Francis Turner Palgrave, boasted the collaboration of Tennyson. Mr. Palgrave represented the *élite* of the prosperous criticism of his day, the essence of literary journalism; and he was for ten years adhesively Professor of Poetry at Oxford. It now is deemed correct for such critics to set Blake's

Heine that it is worth while to compare the following poem by him with the two poems quoted on p. 341. The solitary gives the landscape without the figures.

The feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
  Above the swelling stream;
And ragged are the bushes
And rusty now the rushes,
  And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
  His head is white as snow;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
  The robin pipeth now.

Mary Coleridge owed much to Dixon, and her admiration for his work was mutually returned; they became personal friends, and it is to be regretted that the correspondence which passed between these contemporary

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poems alongside of Shakespeare's. Mr. Palgrave aged more slowly than his opinions, and if he allowed the doors of his treasury to yield at last to external pressure, yet the selection of his ultimate revise, which admitted a few of Blake's poems, shows that he had no true appreciation of them. It was Rossetti and Swinburne who called attention to Blake, and they have done the same for Dixon.

poets can never be printed, for they were both good letter-writers, and can have discoursed to each other only on the most worthy topics. The paper called The Last Hermit of Warkworth (published in "Non Sequitur") tells fully of their poetic sympathy; indeed, for the combination of spirituality, humility, imagination, and humour there can hardly have been two persons more similarly gifted. One distinction should perhaps be drawn, and that is that Dixon's humility was superhuman: it mantled such a vast imperious nature that his modesty might have been suspected of pride had it not seemed a gross anthropomorphism to suspect him of anything; otherwise, if persons can be analysed into qualities, there appeared in these particulars as exact a likeness as one could look for; and I have insisted on it in order to draw out what seemed a characteristic idiosyncrasy in Mary Coleridge. For, if the words which I have used, imagination, spirituality, humour, humility, mean to the reader what they do to me, he will, I think, agree that the composition of these qualities implies a melancholic temper: this is their logical

consequence, and Dixon had the corresponding melancholy to the full; but Mary Coleridge was sanguine and merry. From the sonnet given above one may infer that being afraid of melancholy she cultivated light-heartedness for disguise and distraction, and this is true; but the warring principles thus pitted against each other must have been equally strong. The analysis may have served to define the difficulty, which may be reduced to this, namely, that it is possible for a wide, light-hearted, active enjoyment of life to coexist in the same person with an intellectual imagination so pertinacious and tyrannous as to make any life which implied thought appear evil and intolerable. For those two things coexisted in Mary Coleridge.

Blake, it may occur to one, showed something of this disposition, that is, he associated spirituality and active imagination with a cheerful happiness. But we call him a visionary, and mean by that, that he was overmastered by clear, internal presentations in which he had unshaken faith and took great pleasure; and this is altogether different from the imaginations of questioning

thought. Blake was always a favourite poet with Miss Coleridge, and she is often very like him both in matter and manner, as will be recognised in these two poems from "Fancy's Following:"

THE WITCH.

"I have walked a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
O lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

"The cutting wind is a cruel foe.
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still,
My little white feet are sore.
O lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!"

Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came — she came — and the quivering flame
Sank and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at the door.

MASTER AND GUEST.

There came a man across the moor,
Fell and foul of face was he.
He left the path by the cross-roads three,
And stood in the shadow of the door.

I asked him in to bed and board.
I never hated any man so.
He said he could not say me No.
He sat in the seat of my own dear lord.

"Now sit you by my side!" he said,
"Else may I neither eat nor drink.
You would not have me starve, I think."
He ate the offerings of the dead.

"I 'll light you to your bed," quoth I.
"My bed is yours — but light the way!"
I might not turn aside nor stay;
I showed him where we twain did lie.

The cock was trumpeting the morn.
He said, "Sweet love, a long farewell!
You have kissed a citizen of Hell,
And a soul was doomed when you were born.

"Mourn, mourn no longer for your dear!
Him may you never meet above.
The gifts that Love hath given to Love,
Love gives away again to Fear."

I have compared the poems in "Fancy's Following" with Blake, Heine, and Dixon, and it is likely enough that they may generally be considered as nearer to Blake than

to either of the others. In the two poems last quoted we have vivid pictures, presumably intended to convey a meaning which, however, partly escapes us; and, besides the absolute contradictions which will no doubt appear in poems written in all kinds of moods over a period of more than twenty years, readers of Mary Coleridge will also have to expect this sort of obscurity. I will let her speak for herself. She is defending her old liking for a poem in which a romantic effect was apparently sought by the sound of nonsensical verses:

> What do they mean?
>
> Fatal question! There is no defence. It is no easier to say now what they mean than it was then; yet is the charm as strong. What does Maeterlinck mean, and Verlaine? What did Morris mean in his glorious youth when he was not *the idle singer of an empty day,* but the lark that sang the dawn? What did Shakespeare mean when he wrote the Fool's Song at the end of "Twelfth Night?"
>
> Meaning is to poetry what morals are to life. As in the lives of those who live best there are exquisite moments when life is life alone, so now and again poets forget to be anything else. No one except a poet could write such nonsense as this.

This defence of "nonsense" covers more than we demand, for poems like "The

Witch" are not nonsense. If they are objected to on the score of nonsense, all that the objector can mean is that they convey to him no *definite* idea; and if this objection be examined it crumbles away as we are driven to admit that by *definite idea* we mean very often only an idea that has a recognised name; and the best named ideas are often very shadowy. Such poems as these are sometimes more or less allegorical, and in so far are but one step above the old Greek riddle in which a simple object is described in paradoxical terms; but the best of them have little or nothing of this: they are truly imaginative constructions. Suppose that in a dream one should receive a very strong intellectual impression which one found it impossible to reduce to words. This is not uncommon. Suppose then that by reconstructing the dream one could reproduce in oneself something of this elusive intellectual impression; then if a description of the visions that produced the idea were written down — say, a poem made of them — one might use such a poem for oneself to reproduce the inexpressible idea. But such a description might not provoke exactly the

same idea in others; the art of doing that is, I suppose, an "occult" art. Now the poems with which we are dealing may be very much in this condition; it is a misunderstanding that shies at them, for in so far as they do provoke definite feelings or other effects they are works of imagination.

The term "imagination," which I have so frequently used, demands definition. Of what sort was Mary Coleridge's imagination? The answer would not be easy if she had not given it herself. In the essay on "Words" she writes thus:

> It is because they cannot think, that infants are happy, despite internal sufferings and coercive treatment from without which would cause a person of riper years to commit suicide. It is because in sleep we cannot think, or only think distortedly, that in sleep we are happy. Distorted thinking is sometimes, not always, less wearisome than that unceasing rush of trivial images through the brain, which, for want of a saner word, we call thinking when awake. In certain moods the thought of thought eternal will even drive us to curse our immortality; we should be ready to sell that inalienable and oppressive birthright for the condition of a stone. More grateful to our ears than *There shall be no night there* is *The night cometh*. We wish that death would indeed come not as a new dawn, but like the end of day, bringing with it the same exquisite sense of freedom from the endless spinning

and weaving of the intellect. To some this remedy of the quiet fall of darkness may appear more soothing than sleep itself, inasmuch as we are more conscious of happy influence. It gives us over to the life of feeling. It mesmerises the brain, yet leaves the rest of the man awake. . . . Sleep, then, is one specific against reflection, and darkness is another.

Now though this does not distinguish between *thoughts* and *images*, and though a line cannot be drawn between them, it will make things clearer if we separate them, and suppose two kinds of imagination, one intellectual, of thoughts; the other sensuous, of images; the first of these so unpleasant and wearisome that she longed to escape from it; the second pleasant, a respite from the first, and of the nature of dreaming. One is her normal condition by day, the other her normal condition in darkness and sleep. The distinction seems to be recognised in the following passage from "The Seven Sleepers" (I italicise the words):

Action is much faster than narrative, and *thoughts* are much slower; not slower in reality, but slower because of the enormous multitude clustering, like bees, upon a single thread, of which it is impossible to give any idea in words. Especially in darkness does it appear impossible, for the brain works uninterruptedly, receiving no suggestion from without, and the

host of *images* presented becomes so vast that it cannot follow or recollect them itself in daylight.

This is a plain description of her own experience, and the book from which it is taken is one long illustration of an overflowing wealth of suggestion which baffled her selection. Her imagination was largely of the intellectual type, and it would seem that every fresh edge of thought, as it arose in her mind, was besieged by a thousand lesser thoughts, like a magnetised knife-blade covered with iron filings. And the picture of her mind would be the sea as it appears when there is a breeze off shore, and every wave that arises is crowned by a million of bursting bubbles, and travels on trailing a white mane of foam down its back. The actual condition must be common to all thought; it is the excess and vivid conscious perception of it that constitutes this "imagination." I can remember that, when first I knew her, I supposed that she did not recognise the necessary artistic limits of imagination; but I am sure that it was the number and activity of her thoughts that embarrassed her, any one of them seeming to lead anywhere, and offering, therefore,

a delusive promise of return; and it was in this that her chief difficulty of composition lay. The first essay in "Non Sequitur," indeed its strange title, and the stranger ἄνοδος of "Fancy's Following" all bear witness to the author being conscious of this inconsequent quality or quantity of her fancy. "Anyone can begin," she writes, in happy disregard of the proverbial difficulty of beginning. She once sent me the beginnings of three separate stories, asking me what could be done with them. Two of them were magically interesting. After puzzling over the problem I was constrained to say that nothing more could be made of them; she had written up to an *impasse;* continuation was impossible, as indeed she had found it; and I heard the other day that Robert Louis Stevenson made a like remark when he had read a little way into "The Seven Sleepers." I was told that he said, "The young lady is devilish clever, but she will be more than that if she gets through with her story." With regard to the unfinished tales I tried to persuade her to leave them unfinished and write some more. Why should the story end? What

does it matter? Better to break off than to break down. But since I would not presume to judge romance, let us provisionally hearken to Stevenson again; for he was both artist and professor. He, in his excellent "Gossip on Romance," has written thus:

> The early part of "Monte Cristo," down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared those moving incidents without a tremor. . . . The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural, and dull; but as for those early chapters I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance.

What, then, is the use or value of that sequel? Would not the book have been at least as good if it had left off before it began to be so bad? It is better for a man to have poor legs than none, but it is worse in a statue. Besides, a story is good in proportion to its interest, and if there is a certain kind of interest which can only be given on the condition that the story shall not be forced to wind up, why trouble ourselves with the pedantry of an orthodox *dénouement?* Agreed that a good artistic

story-teller should and will begin to build so that he shall be able to finish; but if this limits him in his initial procedure, and he might have been for the time more interesting if he had disregarded the tangle that he was weaving, I for my part prefer my delectation to his scholastic scruples, and I believe that there are many who will agree with me that there is plenty of room for unfinished tales. That wonderful first book, "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus," will illustrate all these points. The conclusion is not altogether satisfactory, but I do not know that one should complain of it; it is certainly better than one could expect. The whole book is of course somewhat uncomfortable. Never to have any notion of what will happen next, and not quite understanding everything that does happen; not to be within hail of a guess as to what anyone will reply to whatever may be said to him; to push on through a tangle of intellectual surprises, and watch it grow portentously more and more inextricable and complex — all this, in spite of the unflagging brilliance and freshness, is somewhat uncomfortable. But there is a discomfort in galloping over

rough country if you consider the essence of ease, or compare the exercise with sitting in an armchair by the fire when you have come home fatigued. Comfort or discomfort, the pastime of that book was a delicious refreshment to me compared with the suburban paralysis of some average romance, where the only poor surprise is that anyone should have been at the pains to write it.

And it is to this very same profusion of imagination that she owes her justness and balance and the light touch which never dwells too long nor labours on a reflection. In the following passage the brilliant condensation is more effective than a mile of sermons; and how forcibly true is the *momentary* sadness which the winged thought gave to Victorine; it is gone as quickly as it came, like a fly that had settled on her hand.

The stars were sparkling up above, the lights of the city deep down below in the river.

"Beautiful," she said, gazing.

And even as she gazed a momentary sadness overcame her at the thought that, out of the many thousand people congregated there, she only was enjoying the

scene. The lamps and candles that made those curving lines, those fairy zigzags for her pleasure, were shining by sick-beds, in factories restless with the unceasing toil of wearied workers — in chambers so lonely that sleep would not enter them, so full of busy wickedness that they had no leisure to be dark.

If this is a specimen of her prose, can her poetry be better? Well, the imagination that inspires both is the famous winged horse, which, though it could bear her easily on the level, did not always rein well; but in her lyric flights, the unrestrained mountings of her soul, it was one with herself. And it is the intimacy and spontaneity of her poems that will give them their chief value. They will be her portrait, an absolutely truthful picture of a wondrously beautiful and gifted spirit, whom thought could not make melancholy, nor sorrow sad; not in conventional attitude, nor with fixed features, nor lightly to be interpreted, nor even always to be understood, but mystical rather and enigmatical; a poetic effigy, the only likeness of worth; a music self-born of her contact with the wisdom and passion of the world, and which all the folly and misery of man could provoke only to gentle and loving strains.

Is this wide world not large enough to fill thee,
Nor Nature, nor that deep man's Nature, Art?
Are they too thin, too weak and poor to still thee,
Thou little heart?

Dust art thou, and to dust again returnest,
A spark of fire within a beating clod.
Should that be infinite for which thou burnest?
Must it be God?

The Bibelot

ANY one who has the Essays of Elia to his grasp and keep, no matter what edition, (though it will be seen we have reasons for our own particular preferences,) need scarcely be told that of all bedside or book-a-bosom books they rank with the divine few, not of an age but for all time. And yet how little account the world made of these two volumes during their author's life! The first series reprinted from the London Magazine, (1820–2) came out in 1823. The second series did not find its way into book form until 1833, the year preceding Lamb's death. A second edition appeared in 1834; thence onward, in 1835, 1838, 1840, with ever increasing rapidity it was reprinted as occasion demanded. In 1835, the first and second series came out in a two volume set, and for the past three decades their reissue in America and England is almost beyond computation.

Charles Lamb was born February 10th, 1775, and died December 27th, 1834. "As a conscious literary artist he lives almost entirely by the Essays of Elia," and was forty-five before the first of them was writ-

ten. It would be difficult to point out the best editions[1] *of* Elia. *Their number is legion and no single year but verifies Lan-*

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1 *Consulting one's own preference we should say by all means own the following editions. Don't boggle at the cost but buy them all and when you have done so, and read them, go and buy still more :*

1. The Essays of Elia *by Charles Lamb. Edited by Augustine Birrell with etchings by Herbert Railton. (The Temple Library.) Fcap 8vo., 2 vols., London, (Dent,) 1888. For companion volumes in the same series* Specimens of English Dramatic Poets *by Charles Lamb. Edited by Israel Gollancz. Fcap 8vo., 2 vols., London, (Dent,) 1893.*

2. The Essays of Elia *with an Introduction by Augustine Birrell and illustrations by Charles E. Brock. Crown 8vo., 2 vols., London, (Dent,) 1900.*

A companion volume is found in Essays by Leigh Hunt. *Edited by Arthur Symons with illustrations by H. M. Brock. Crown 8vo., London, 1903.*

3. The Essays of Elia. *(First Series.) Illustrations by A. Garth Jones with an Introduction by E. V. Lucas. Square 8vo., (Methuen) London, 1902.*

4. The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb. *Edited by E. V. Lucas. Octavo. 7 vols., (Methuen) London, 1903.*

5. The Life of Charles Lamb *by E. V. Lucas. 2 vols., 8vo., (Methuen) London, 1905.*

6 In the Footprints of Charles Lamb by Benj. Ellis Martin with a Bibliography by Ernest Dressell North. *4to., cloth. New York, 1890.*

7. The Riverside Press has issued Old China *in a diminutive and dainty edition of 540 copies, 1912.*

The earlier editors and critics of Lamb are satisfactorily accounted for by Mr. Lucas. For Pater's essay on Lamb see The Bibelot *(Vol. XII) for 1906.*

dor's assertion made eighty years ago: "The World," said he, "will never see again two such delightful volumes. . . No man living is capable of writing the worst twenty pages of them." True, Lord Macaulay with a glorious Mid-Victorian air of finality disposed of Lamb as a moralist in one of the most owlish obiter dicta *ever printed on that incomparable essay,* The Artificial Comedy of the Last Century. *True, also, and pity 't is 't is true, that Thomas Carlyle wrote some bitter pages in his diary which for his own sake rather than for Lamb's had well been deleted from the text. But who cares? As Pet Marjorie phrased it, who* NOW "cares a single dam?" *They are all gone: Elia and his works remain.*

Our selections from the essays are the three which in many ways remain inimitable. In Old China *we have autobiography raised to its nth power. In it "the completest picture of Mary Lamb in her happier periods may be found." Here we see Lamb in that midnight visit to old Barker the bookseller, whence the folio* Beaumont and Fletcher *was dragged home to Mary, (it now reposes in the British Museum).*

Nor is the essay on Dream-Children *all a dream, but, as Mr. Lucas has said, it is*

one of "the most beautiful of all the writings of brother or sister on their second home," (Blakesware) and should be taken as a part of their authentic biography.

Concerning The Child Angel *it is one of those exquisite evocations not to be paralleled even by* Elia. *To find its counterpart in poetry we must read a poem written less than two years ago:*

NOEL.

A little while and we shall know
Where all our vanish'd children go,

And e'en, perchance, may recognise
Their old-remember'd, astral eyes!

(O Noel, Noel! comest thou
From them to us with kiss and vow?)

A little while and we shall hear
The Child's soft footfall drawing near,

The Child who our dead children takes,
In his safe keeping for our sakes,

And they, those children we loved most
Will watch for him and think him lost,

And yearn for his return with eyes
That search the deeps of Paradise.

(O Noel, Noel! in thy rest
May all our vanish'd ones be blest!)

THREE ESSAYS
By
CHARLES LAMB.

I. OLD CHINA.
II. DREAM-CHILDREN.
III. THE CHILD ANGEL.

"A set of old china, *five pounds. . . bought of an old cloaths man for five shillings. Right."*

R. DODSLEY (The Toy-Shop) *1735.*

COULD I have visited London thirty years ago, I would rather have spent an hour with Charles Lamb than with any other of its residents. He was a fine specimen of the vagabond, as I conceive him. His mind was as full of queer nooks and tortuous passages as any mansion-house of Elizabeth's day or earlier, where the rooms are cosy, albeit a little low in the roof; where dusty stained lights are falling on old oaken panelings; where every bit of furniture has a reverend flavour of ancientness; where portraits of noble men and women, all dead long ago, are hanging on the walls; and where a black-letter Chaucer with silver clasps is lying open on a seat in the window. There was nothing modern about him. The garden of his mind did not flaunt in gay parterres; it resembled those that Cowley and Evelyn delighted in, with clipped trees, and shaven lawns, and stone satyrs, and dark, shadowing yews, and a sun-dial with a Latin motto sculptured on it, standing at the farther end. Lamb was the slave of quip and whimsey; he stuttered out puns to the detriment of all serious and improving conversation, and twice or so in the year he was overaken in liquor. Well, in in spite of these things, perhaps on account of these things, I love his memory. For love and charity ripened in that nature as peache ripen on the wall that fronts the sun. Although he did not blow his trumpet in the corners of the steets, he was tried, as few men are, and fell not. He jested that he might not weep. He wore a martyr's heart beneath his suit of motley. And only years after his death, when to admiration or censure he was alike insensible, did the world know his story, and that of his sister Mary.

(DREAMTHORP)—ALEXANDER SMITH.

OLD CHINA.

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then — why should I now have? — to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective — a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends — whom distance cannot diminish — figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still — for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and

the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver — two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another — for likeness is identity on tea-cups — is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead — a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on — if far or near can be predicated of their world — see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here — a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive — so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help

remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort — when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;"— so she was pleased to ramble on,—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your

friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare — and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late — and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures — and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome — and when you presented it to me — and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it) — and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that

over-worn suit — your old corbeau — for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen — or sixteen shillings was it? — a great affair we thought it then — which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you come home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the 'Lady Blanch;' when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money — and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday — holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich — and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad — and how you

would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store — only paying for the ale that you must call for — and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth — and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing — and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us — but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way — and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense — which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the battle of Hexham, and the surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the

Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery —where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially —that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then —and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house?

The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough, — but there was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages — and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then — but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common — in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear — to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now — that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat — when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is will-

ing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now,) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion,

with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year — no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power — those natural dilations of the youthful spirit,

which circumstances cannot straiten — with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer — and shall be wise to do so — than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return — could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day — could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them — could the good old one shilling gallery days return — they are dreams, my cousin, now — but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa — be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers — could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours — and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us — I know not the fathom line that ever touched

a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonaish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

DREAM-CHILDREN.

A REVERIE.

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say,

how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect

for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet

I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken pannels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at — or in lying

about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth — or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount

the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I

did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair

was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" —— and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

THE CHILD ANGEL.

A DREAM.

I CHANCED upon the prettiest, oddest, fantastical thing of a dream the other night, that you shall hear of. I had been reading the "Loves of the Angels," and went to bed with my head full of speculations, suggested by that extraordinary legend. It had given birth to innumerable conjectures; and, I remember, the last waking thought, which I gave expression to on my pillow, was a sort of wonder, "what could come of it."

I was suddenly transported, how or whither I could scarcely make out—but to some celestial region. It was not the real heavens neither—not the downright Bible heaven—but a kind of fairyland heaven, about which a poor human fancy may have leave to sport and air itself, I will hope, without presumption.

Methought—what wild things dreams are!—I was present—at what would you imagine?—at an angel's gossiping.

Whence it came, or how it came, or who bid it come, or whether it came purely of its own head, neither you nor I know—but there lay, sure enough, wrapped in its little cloudy swaddling bands—a Child Angel.

Sun-threads — filmy beams — ran through the celestial napery of what seemed its princely cradle. All the winged orders hovered round, watching when the new-born should open its yet closed eyes; which, when it did, first one, and then the other — with a solicitude and apprehension, yet not such as, stained with fear, dims the expanding eyelids of mortal infants, but as if to explore its path in those its unhereditary palaces — what an inextinguishable titter that time spared not celestial visages! Nor wanted there to my seeming — O the inexplicable simpleness of dreams! — bowls of that cheering nectar,

— which mortals *caudle* call below —

Nor were wanting faces of female ministrants, — stricken in years, as it might seem, — so dexterous were those heavenly attendants to counterfeit kindly similitudes of earth, to greet, with terrestrial child-rites the young *present*, which earth had made to heaven.

Then were celestial harpings heard, not in full symphony as those by which the spheres are tutored; but, as loudest instruments on

earth speak oftentimes, muffled; so to accommodate their sound the better to the weak ears of the imperfect-born. And, with the noise of those subdued soundings, the Angelet sprang forth, fluttering its rudiments of pinions—but forthwith flagged and was recovered into the arms of those full-winged angels. And a wonder it was to see how, as years went round in heaven—a year in dreams is as a day—continually its white shoulders put forth buds of wings, but, wanting the perfect angelic nutriment, anon was shorn of its aspiring, and fell fluttering—still caught by angel hands—for ever to put forth shoots, and to fall fluttering, because its birth was not of the unmixed vigour of heaven.

And a name was given to the Babe Angel, and it was to be called *Ge-Urania*, because its production was of earth and heaven.

And it could not taste of death, by reason of its adoption into immortal palaces: but it was to know weakness, and reliance, and the shadow of human imbecility; and it went with a lame gait; but in its goings it exceeded all mortal children in grace and swiftness. Then pity first sprang up in angelic bosoms;

and yearnings (like the human) touched them at the sight of the immortal lame one.

And with pain did then first those Intuitive Essences, with pain and strife to their natures (not grief), put back their bright intelligences, and reduce their ethereal minds, schooling them to degrees and slower processes, so to adapt their lessons to the gradual illumination (as must needs be) of the half-earth-born; and what intuitive notices they could not repel (by reason that their nature is, to know all things at once), the half-heavenly novice, by the better part of its nature, aspired to receive into its understanding; so that Humility and Aspiration went on even-paced in the instruction of the glorious Amphibium.

But, by reason that Mature Humanity is too gross to breathe the air of that super-subtile region, its portion was, and is, to be a child for ever.

And because the human part of it might not press into the heart and inwards of the palace of its adoption, those full-natured angels tended it by turns in the purlieus of the palace, where were shady groves and rivulets, like this green earth from which it

came: so Love, with Voluntary Humility, waited upon the entertainment of the new-adopted.

And myriads of years rolled round (in dreams Time is nothing), and still it kept, and is to keep, perpetual childhood, and is the Tutelar Genius of Childhood upon earth, and still goes lame and lovely.

By the banks of the river Pison is seen, lone-sitting by the grave of the terrestrial Adah, whom the angel Nadir loved, a Child; but not the same which I saw in heaven. A mournful hue overcasts its lineaments; nevertheless, a correspondency is between the child by the grave, and that celestial orphan, whom I saw above; and the dimness of the grief upon the heavenly, is as a shadow or emblem of that which stains the beauty of the terrestrial. And this correspondency is not to be understood but by dreams.

And in the archives of heaven I had grace to read, how that once the angel Nadir, being exiled from his place for mortal passion, upspringing on the wings of parental love (such power had parental love for a moment to suspend the else-irrevocable law) appeared

for a brief instant in his station; and, depositing a wondrous Birth, straightway disappeared, and the palaces knew him no more. And this charge was the self-same Babe, who goeth lame and lovely—but Adah sleepeth by the river Pison.

The Bibelot

It is surprising how often among moderns we come upon traces of Sir Thomas Browne. Echoes from this old world of thought have been noted in George Gissing's Ryecroft, *and we catch the sound of its "dirges and ditties infinite" in Compton Leith's little known* Sirenica; *in James Thomson, at least, in one instance, his work is surcharged with murmurs as of sepulchral urns from long buried chambers and grassy barrows of prehistoric races. In* A Lady of Sorrow *we discover this poet laureate of Death reciting the liturgical rites of the dark mother of all men born. It is customary to consider De Quincey as the direct inspiration of Thomson, but there are pages Browne himself would not have disdained to sign —* Suspiria, *that the Opium Eater undoubtedly suggested which in the last audit of the man and his scheme of thought are "B. V.'s" indubitable own. Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Coleridge, and the anonymous* Retrospective *reviewer of 1820 have all discoursed in ample appreciative measure upon* Hydriotaphia, *but it is in J. A. Symonds, (1886,) Walter*

Pater, (1889,) and Charles Whibley, (1913,) that the final words are uttered concerning Urn Burial *and its author.*
"*He delighted to live in the conjectural world, and lived in it so long, that conjecture and things impossible to be known, assumed the place of realities and things knowable.*"[1]

And Hazlitt who is responsible for the following tells us, "Who is it, then, you would like to see 'in his habit as he lived', if you had choice of the whole range of English literature?" Lamb at once named Sir Thomas Browne and Fulke Greville, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney. And the reason for his choice was "that their writings are riddles, and they themselves the most mysterious of personages. They resemble the soothsayers of old, who deal in dark hints and doubtful oracles, and I should like to ask them the meaning of what no mortal but themselves, I should suppose, can fathom." One could well believe that Coleridge never got his knowledge of Hydriotaphia *at first hand if the much belauded passage cited by Hazlett is*

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[1] *This is from George Burnett's* Specimens of English Prose Writers to the close of the Seventeenth Century, (1806). *And Mr. E. V. Lucas thinks it may be in Lamb's own language.*

to be taken as a genuine specimen of his marginalia.

Modern editions may be said to start with the one edited by Sir Simon Wilkin, Pickering, 4 vols. octavo, 1836, (reissued by Bohn, 3 vols., 1852,) ending with the final text by Charles Sayle, London and Edinburgh, 1903-1807, 3 vols. octavo. Selections innumerable have appeared among which those by Sir John Evans, (1893,) and Dr. Greenhill, (1896,) are in many ways the most desirable. J. A. Symonds, (1886,) in Camelot Series and, again, Dr. Greenhill, (1885,) in the Golden Treasury Series should not be overlooked. We believe that Urn Burial *is read to best advantage in the Chiswick Press edition which Evans edited; while in Everymans Library, (1906,) a most compact but scarcely beautiful reprint edited by Prof. C. H. Herford, combines in one volume more matter for the money than any other edition known to us. A little edition of Mr. Grant Richards (1906,) however, gives what all the other texts, complete or selected, fail to show, and that is translations of the quotations in Greek and Latin so much in evidence throughout Browne's essays.*[2]

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2 *See also a pretentious edition of* Religio Medici and Other Essays by Sir Thomas Browne, edited by

Browne it is true set out to write a treatise upon Urn Burial *which ends as one of the greatest prose poems in the English language. "His cadences rise and fall like the cadence of noble music . . . from beginning to end the poem is a procession of splendid phrases." "And then" as Mr. Whibley puts it "we arrive at the famous Fifth Chapter which to have written, brief as it is, were sufficient for eternal fame."* [3] *But it would be impossible to cite all that has been said concerning Sir Thomas Browne and his works. What we have given will at least acquaint our readers with the abundant material at their disposal. It only remains to add that in his final great summing up in the Fifth Chapter, Browne gathers his elegiac splendours about him and bequeaths the world a treasure which can neither be stolen nor can moth corrupt nor the wit or wisdom of all men since his period add unto or take away.*

C. J. Holme, decorated by C. S. Ricketts. (*The Vale Press, London, 1902.*) *For those who value careful and thorough editing the volumes already cited will amply suffice.*

3 *See* Essays in Biography *by Charles Whibley, (London, 1913). Pages 277-311.*

THE LAST CHAPTER OF *HYDRIOTAPHIA*
By SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

I. AN APPRECIATION BY WALTER PATER.
II. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.
III. DISCOURSE (CHAPTER FIVE).

If there is any English prose which it is not wholly profane to compare with a symphony of Beethoven, it is surely the magnificent discourse of the Hydriotaphia, *with its vast undulations of rhythmic sound, its triumphal processions, its funereal pageants, its abysmal plunges into unfathomable depths, its ecstatic soarings to the heights of heaven.*

C. H. HERFORD.

WHERE but in Sir Thomas Browne shall one hope to find music so Miltonic, an intonation of such solemn chords as are struck in the following opening bar of a passage in the URN-BURIAL — *Now since these dead bones have . . . quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests.* What a melodious ascent as of a prelude to some impassioned requiem breathing from the pomps of earth, and from the sanctities of the grave! What a *fluctus decumanus* of rhetoric! Time expounded, not by generations or centuries, but by the vast periods of conquests and dynasties; by cycles of Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Antiochi and Arsacides! And these vast successions of time distinguished and figured by the uproars which revolve at their inaugurations: by the drums and tramplings rolling overhead upon the chambers of forgotten dead — the trepidations of time and mortality vexing, at secular intervals, the everlasting sabbaths of the grave!

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

It is as a great master of diction, as a rhetorician in the highest sense of that abused word, as one who improvised solemn cathedral voluntaries upon the organ of our language in its period of cumbrous and scholastic pomp, that Sir Thomas Browne proclaims himself the rival of Jeremy Taylor and the peer of Milton in their highest flights of cadenced prose. . . . and in the peroration of the treatise on *Urn Burial*, that we must place him among the foremost writers of English prose.

J. A. SYMONDS.

I.

AN APPRECIATION.

BY WALTER PATER.

PALINGENESIS, resurrection, effected by orderly prescription — the "re-individualling" of an "incinerated organism" — is a subject which affords us a natural transition to the little book of the *Hydriotaphia*, or *Treatise of Urn-Burial* — about fifty or sixty pages — which, together with a very singular letter not printed till after Browne's death, is perhaps, after all, the best justification of Browne's literary reputation, as it were his own curiously figured urn, and treasure-place of immortal memory.

In its first presentation to the public this letter was connected with Browne's *Christian Morals;* but its proper and sympathetic collocation would be rather with the *Urn-Burial*, of which it is a kind of prelude, or strikes the keynote. He is writing in a very complex situation — to a friend, upon occasion of the death of a common friend. The deceased apparently had been little known to Browne himself till his recent visits, while the intimate friend to whom he is writing had been absent at the time; and the leading

motive of Browne's letter is the deep impression he has received during those visits, of a sort of physical beauty in the coming of death, with which he still surprises and moves his reader. There had been, in this case, a tardiness and reluctancy in the circumstances of dissolution, which had permitted him, in the character of a physician, as it were to assist at the spiritualising of the bodily frame by natural process; a wonderful new type of a kind of mortified grace being evolved by the way. The spiritual body had anticipated the formal moment of death; the alert soul, in that tardy decay, changing its vesture gradually, and as if piece by piece. The infinite future had invaded this life perceptibly to the senses, like the ocean felt far inland up a tidal river. Nowhere, perhaps, is the attitude of questioning awe on the threshold of another life displayed with the expressiveness of this unique morsel of literature; though there is something of the same kind, in another than the literary medium, in the delicate monumental sculpture of the early Tuscan School, as also in many of the designs of William Blake, often, though unconsciously, much in

sympathy with those unsophisticated Italian workmen. With him, as with them, and with the writer of the *Letter to a Friend upon the occasion of the death of his intimate Friend*, — so strangely! the visible function of death is but to refine, to detach from aught that is vulgar. And this elfin letter, really an impromptu epistle to a friend, affords the best possible light on the general temper of the man who could be moved by the accidental discovery of those old urns at Walsingham — funeral relics of "Romans, or Britons Romanised which had learned Roman customs" — to the composition of that wonderful book the *Hydriotaphia*. He had drawn up a short account of the circumstance at the moment; but it was after ten years' brooding that he put forth the finished treatise, dedicated to an eminent collector of ancient coins and other rarities, with congratulations that he "can daily command the view of so many imperial faces," and (by way of frontispiece) with one of the urns, "drawn with a coal taken out of it and found among the burnt bones." The discovery had resuscitated for him a whole world of latent observation, from life, from

out-of-the-way reading, from the natural world, and fused into a composition, which with all its quaintness we may well pronounce classical, all the heterogeneous elements of that singular mind. The desire to "record these risen ashes and not to let them be buried twice among us," had set free, in his manner of conceiving things, something not wholly analysable, something that may be properly called genius, which shapes his use of common words to stronger and deeper senses, in a way unusual in prose writing. Let the reader, for instance, trace his peculiarly sensitive use of the epithets *thin* and *dark*, both here and in the *Letter to a Friend*.

Upon what a grand note he can begin and end chapter or paragraph! — "When the funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over:" — "And a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us." Dealing with a very vague range of feelings, it is his skill to associate them to very definite objects. Like the Soul, in Blake's design, "exploring the recesses of the tomb," he carries a light, the light of the poetic faith which he cannot put off him, into those dark places, "the abode of worms and pismires,"

peering round with a boundless curiosity and no fear; noting the various casuistical considerations of men's last form of self-love; all those whims of humanity as a "student of perpetuity," the mortuary customs of all nations, which, from their very closeness to our human nature, arouse in most minds only a strong feeling of distaste. There is something congruous with the impassive piety of the man in his waiting on accident from without to take start for the work, which, of all his work, is most truly touched by the "divine spark." Delightsome as its eloquence is actually found to be, that eloquence is attained out of a certain difficulty and halting crabbedness of expression; the wretched punctuation of the piece being not the only cause of its impressing the reader with the notion that he is but dealing with a collection of notes for a more finished composition, and of a different kind; perhaps a purely erudite treatise on its subject, with detachment of all personal colour now adhering to it. Out of an atmosphere of all-pervading oddity and quaintness — the quaintness of mind which reflects that this disclosing of the urns of the ancients hath

"left unto our view some parts which they never beheld themselves" — arises a work really ample and grand, nay! classical, as I said, by virtue of the effectiveness with which it fixes a type in literature; as, indeed, at its best, romantic literature (and Browne is generally romantic) in every period attains classical quality, giving true measure of the very limited value of those well-worn critical distinctions. And though the *Urn-Burial* certainly has much of the character of a poem, yet one is never allowed to forget that it was designed, candidly, as a scientific treatise on one department of ancient "culture" (as much so as Guichard's curious old French book on *Divers Manners of Burial*) and was the fruit of much labour, in the way especially of industrious selection from remote and difficult writers; there being then few or no handbooks, or anything like our modern short-cuts to varied knowledge. Quite unaffectedly, a curious learning saturates, with a kind of grey and aged colour most apt and congruous with the subject-matter, all the thoughts that arise in him. His great store of reading, so freely displayed, he uses almost as poetically as

Milton; like him, profiting often by the mere sonorous effect of some heroic or ancient name, which he can adapt to that same sort of learned sweetness of cadence with which so many of his single sentences are made to fall upon the ear.

II.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO MY WORTHY AND HONOURED FRIEND
THOMAS LE GROS OF CROSTWICK ESQUIRE.

WHEN the Funerall pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred Friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes, and having no old experience of the duration of their Reliques, held no opinion of such after-considerations.

But who knows the fate of his bones, or how often he is to be buried? who hath the Oracle of his ashes, or whether they are to be scattered? The Reliques of many lie like the ruines of [a] *Pompeys*, in all parts of the earth; And when they arrive at your hands, these may seem to have wandred far, who in a direct [b] and *Meridian* Travell, have but few miles of known Earth between your self and the Pole.

That the bones of *Theseus* should be seen again [c] in *Athens*, was not beyond conjecture, and hopeful expectation; but that these should arise so opportunely to serve your

a *Pompeios Juvenes Asia, atque Europa, sed ipsum terra tegit* Lybies. 1

b Little directly, but Sea between your house and *Greenland*.

c Brought back by *Cimon*. Plutarch.

self, was an hit of fate and honour beyond prediction.

We cannot but wish these Urnes might have the effect of Theatrical vessels, and great [d] *Hippodrome* Urnes in *Rome;* to resound the acclamations and honour due unto you. But these are sad and sepulchral Pitchers, which have no joyful voices; silently expressing old mortality, the ruines of forgotten times, and can only speak with life, how long in this corruptible frame, some parts may be uncorrupted; yet able to outlast bones long unborn, and noblest pyle [e] among us.

We present not these as any strange sight or spectacle unknown to your eyes, who have beheld the best of Urnes, and noblest variety of Ashes; Who are your self no slender master of Antiquities, and can daily command the view of so many Imperiall faces; Which raiseth your thoughts unto old things, and consideration of times before you, when even living men were Antiquities; when the living might exceed the dead, and to depart this world, could not be properly said, to go unto the [f] greater number. And so run up your thoughts upon the ancient of dayes,

d The great Urnes in the *Hippodrome* at *Rome* conceived to resound the voices of people at their shows.

e Worthily possessed by that true Gentleman Sir *Horatio Townshend* my honoured Friend.

f *Abiit ad plures.* 2

the Antiquaries truest object, unto whom the eldest parcels are young, and earth it self an Infant; and without g Ægyptian account makes but small noise in thousands.

g Which makes the world so many years old.

We were hinted by the occasion, not catched the opportunity to write of old things, or intrude upon the Antiquary. We are coldly drawn unto discourses of Antiquities, who have scarce time before us to comprehend new things, or make out learned Novelties. But seeing they arose as they lay, almost in silence among us, at least in short account suddenly passed over; we were very unwilling they should die again, and be buried twice among us.

Beside, to preserve the living, and make the dead to live, to keep men out of their Urnes, and discourse of humane fragments in them, is not impertinent unto our profession; whose study is life and death, who daily behold examples of mortality, and of all men least need artificial *memento's*, or coffins by our bed side, to minde us of our graves.

'T is time to observe Occurrences, and let nothing remarkable escape us; The Supinity of elder dayes hath left so much in silence, or time hath so martyred the Records, that

the most [h]industrious heads do finde no easie work to erect a new *Britannia*.

'T is opportune to look back upon old times, and contemplate our Forefathers. Great examples grow thin, and to be fetched from the passed world. Simplicity flies away, and iniquity comes at long strides upon us. We have enough to do to make up our selves from present and passed times, and the whole stage of things scarce serveth for our instruction. A compleat peece of vertue must be made up from the *Centos* of all ages, as all the beauties of *Greece* could make but one handsome *Venus*.

When the bones of King *Arthur* were digged up[i], the old race might think, they beheld therein some Originals of themselves; Unto these of our Urnes none here can pretend relation, and can only behold the Reliques of those persons, who in their life giving the Laws unto their predecessors, after long obscurity, now lye at their mercies. But remembring the early civility they brought upon these Countreys, and forgetting long passed mischiefs; We mercifully preserve their bones, and pisse not upon their ashes.

h Wherein M. *Dugdale* hath excellently well endeavoured and worthy to be countenanced by ingenuous and noble persons.

i In the time of *Henry* the second. *Cambden.*

In the offer of these Antiquities we drive not at ancient Families, so long out-lasted by them; We are farre from erecting your worth upon the pillars of your Fore-fathers, whose merits you illustrate. We honour your old Virtues, conformable unto times before you, which are the Noblest Armoury. And having long experience of your friendly conversation, void of empty Formality, full of freedome, constant and Generous Honesty. I look upon you as a Gemme of the [k] Old Rock, and must professe my self even to Urne and Ashes,

k *Adamas de rupe veteri præstantissimus.*3

Your ever faithfull Friend,
and Servant,
Thomas Browne.

Norwich, May 1. [1658.]

III.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE ON URNE-BURIALL.

(CHAPTER FIVE.)

Now since these dead bones have already out-lasted the living ones of *Methuselah*, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; What Prince can promise such diuturnity unto his Reliques, or might not gladly say,

* *Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim.*[1]

* *Tibullus.*

Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* Monuments. In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation and obscurity their protection: If they dyed by violent hands, and were thrust into their Urnes, these bones become considerable, and some old Philosophers would honour[a] them, whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their bodies; and

a *Oracula Chaldaica cum scholiis pselli & Phethonis.* βίη λιπόντων σῶμα ψυχαὶ καθαρώτεται. *Vi corpus relinquentium animæ purissimæ* 2

to retain a stronger propension unto them: whereas they weariedly left a languishing corps, and with faint desires of re-union. If they fell by long and aged decay, yet wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with Infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death; our life is a sad composition; We live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of *Methuselah*, were work for *Archimedes:* Common Counters summe up the life of *Moses* his man[b]. Our dayes become considerable like petty sums by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our dayes of a span long make not one little finger[c].

b In the Psalme of *Moses.*

c According to the ancient Arithmetick of the hand wherein the little finger of the right hand contracted, signified an hundred. *Pierius in Hieroglyph.*

If the nearnesse of our last necessity, brought a nearer conformity unto it, there were a happinesse in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; When Avarice makes us the sport of death; When even *David* grew politickly cruell; and *Solomon* could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and

before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our dayes, misery makes **Alcmenas* nights, and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish it self, content to be nothing, or never to to have been, which was beyond the *male*-content of *Job*, who cursed not the day of his life, but his Nativity: Content to have so farre been, as to have a Title to future being; Although he had lived here but in an hidden state of life, and as it were an abortion.

* One night as long as three.

What Song the *Syrens* sang, or what name *Achilles* assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzling Questions are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these Ossuaries entred the famous Nations of the dead, and slept with Princes and Counsellours, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above Antiquarism. Not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the Provinciall Guardians, or tutellary Observators. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their Reliques, they had not so grosly erred

The puzling questions of *Tiberius* unto *Grammarians. Marcel. Donatus in Suet.* Κλυτὰ ἔθνεα νεκρᾶ ν. *Hom. Job.* 3

in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but Pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves, a fruitlesse continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as Emblemes of mortall vanities; Antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices. Pagan vain-glories which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no *Atropos* 4 unto the immortality of their Names, were never dampt with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the probable Meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designes, whereby the ancient *Heroes* have already out-lasted their Monuments, and Mechanicall preservations. But in this latter Scene of time we cannot expect such Mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the Prophecy of *Elias*[e], and *Charles* the fifth can never hope to live within two *Methusela's* of *Hector*[f].

And therefore restlesse inquietude for the

e That the world may last but six thousand years.

f Hectors fame lasting above two lives of *Methuselah*, before that famous Prince was extant.

diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations, seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated peece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons, one face of *Janus* holds no proportion unto the other. 'T is too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designes. To extend our memories by Monuments, whose death we dayly pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations, in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations. And being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh Pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortall right-lined circle must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the *Opium* of time, which

g Θ The character of death.

temporally considereth all things; Our Fathers finde their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our Survivors. Grave-stones tell truth scarce fourty years[h]: Generations passe while some trees stand, and old Families last not three Oaks. To be read by bare Inscriptions like many in *Gruter*[i], to hope for Eternity by Ænigmaticall Epithetes, or first letters of our names, to be studied by Antiquaries, who we were, and have new Names given us like many of the Mummies, which men show in several countries, giving them what names they please: and unto some the names of the old Ægyptian Kings out of *Herodotus*, are cold consolations unto the Students of perpetuity, even by everlasting Languages.

h Old ones being taken up, and other bodies laid under them.

i *Gruteri Inscriptiones Antiquæ.*

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in *Cardan*[k]: disparaging his horoscopal inclination and judgement of himself, who cares to subsist like *Hippocrates* Patients, or *Achilles* horses in *Homer*, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsame of our memories, the

k *Cuperem notum esse quod sim, non opto ut sciatur qualis sim.* Card. *in vita propria.*

Entelechia[6] and soul of our subsistences. To be namelesse in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The *Canaanitish* woman lives more happily without a name, then *Herodias* with one. And who had not rather have been the good theef, then *Pilate?*

But the iniquity of oblivion blindely scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? *Herostratus* lives that burnt the Temple of *Diana*, he is almost lost that built it; Time hath spared the Epitaph of *Adrians* horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equall durations; and *Thersites* is like to live as long as *Agamemnon:* Who knows whether the best of men be known? or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, then any that stand remembred in the known account of time, without the favour of the everlasting Register? the first man had been as unknown as the last, and *Methuselahs* long life had been his only Chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired: The greater

part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the Register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty seven Names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living Century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the Æquinox? Euery houre addes unto that current Arithmetique, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the *Lucina* of life, and even Pagans could doubt* whether thus to live, were to dye. Since our longest Sunne sets at right decensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darknesse, and have our light in ashes°. Since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying *memento*'s, and time that grows old it self, bids us hope no long duration: Diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation. †

* *Euripides.*

° According to the custome of the Jewes who place a lighted wax candle in a pot of ashes by the corps. *Leo.*

† *Diuturnity, &c.*] Here may properly be noticed a similar passage which I find in *MS. Sloan.* 1848, fol. 194. [WILKIN.]

"Large are the treasures of oblivion, and heaps of things in a state next to nothing almost numberless;

Darknesse and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory, a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest stroaks of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities, miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant

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much more is buried in silence than recorded, and the largest volumes are but epitomes of what hath been. The account of time began with night, and darkness still attendeth it. Some things never come to light; many have been delivered; but more hath been swallowed in obscurity and the caverns of oblivion. How much is as it were *in vacuo*, and will never be cleared up, of those long living times when men could scarce remember themselves young; and men seem to us not ancient but antiquities, when they [lived] longer in their lives than we can now hope to do in our memories; when men feared not apoplexies and palsies after seven or eight hundred years; when living was so lasting that homicide might admit of distinctive qualifications from the age of the person, and it might seem a lesser injury to kill a man at eight hundred than at forty, and when life was so well worth the living that few or none would kill themselves."

of evils to come, and forgetfull of evils past, is a mercifull provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil dayes, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of Antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls. A good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plurall successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others rather then be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the publick soul of all things, which was no more then to return into their unknown and divine Originall again. Ægyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistences, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding* the winde, and folly. The Ægyptian Mummies, which *Cambyses* or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummie is become Mer-

* *Omnia vanitas & pastio venti,* νομὴ ἀνέμου, βόσκησις *ut olim Aquila & Symmachus.* V. Drus. *Eccles.* 8

chandise, *Mizraim* cures wounds, and *Pharaoh* is sold for balsoms.

In vain do individuals hope for Immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the Moon: Men have been deceived even in their flatteries above the Sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various Cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; *Nimrod* is lost in *Orion*, and *Osyris* in the Dogge-starre. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we finde they are but like the Earth; Durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts: whereof beside Comets and new Stars, perspectives begin to tell tales. And the spots that wander about the Sun, with *Phaetons* favour, would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortall, but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy it self; And the highest strain of omnipotency to be so powerfully constituted, as

not to suffer even from the power of it self. But the sufficiency of Christian Immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance that the boldest Expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a* Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equall lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible Sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like *Sardanapalus*, but the wisedom of funerall Laws found the folly of prodigall blazes, and reduced undoing fires, unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an Urne*.

* According to the Epitaph of *Rufus* and *Beronica* in *Gruterus. Nec ex Eorum bonis plus inventum est, quam Quod sufficeret ad emendam pyram Et picem quibus corpora cremarentur, Et præfica conducta & olla empta.* 9

Five Languages secured not the Epitaph of *Gordianus*[a]; The man of God lives longer without a Tomb then any by one, invisibly interred by Angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing humane discovery. *Enoch* and *Elias* without either tomb or buriall, in an anomalous state of being, are the great Examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all dye but be changed, according to received translation; the last day will make but few graves; at least quick Resurrections will anticipate lasting Sepultures; Some Graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and *Lazarus* be no wonder. When many that feared to dye shall groane that they can dye but once, the dismall state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of Mountaines, not of Monuments, and annihilations shall be courted.

[a] In Greek, Latine, Hebrew, Ægyptian, Arabick, defaced by *Licinius* the Emperour.

While some have studied Monuments,

others have studiously declined them: and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their Graves; wherein [b] *Alaricus* seems most subtle, who had a River turned to hide his bones at the bottome. Even *Sylla* that thought himself safe in his Urne, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his Monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next, who when they dye, make no commotion among the dead, and are not toucht with that poeticall taunt of *Isaiah* [c].

b *Jornandes de rebus Geticis.*

c Isa. 14.

Pyramids, *Arches*, *Obelisks*, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wilde enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian Religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sets on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in Angles of contingency [d].

d *Angulus contingentiæ*, the least of Angles.

Pious spirits who passed their dayes in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, then the world that was before it,

while they lay obscure in the Chaos of pre-ordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, extasis, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kisse of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting Monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names, and prædicament of *Chymera*'s, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their *Elysiums*. But all this is nothing in the Metaphysicks of true belief. To live indeed is to be again our selves, which being not only an hope but an evidence in noble beleevers; 'T is all one to lye in St *Innocents*[e] Church-yard, as in the Sands of *Ægypt:* Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Moles of *Adrianus*[f].

Lucan

——— ——*Tabesne cadavera solvat*
An rogus haud refert.[10] ——— ———

e In *Paris* where bodies soon consume.

f A stately *Mausoleum* or sepulchral pyle built by *Adrianus* in *Rome*, where now standeth the Castle St *Angelo*.

NOTES.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

1. "In Asia and Europe are the graves of Pompey's warriors, but he himself lies in Libyan soil."

2. "He departed to the majority."

3. "A brilliant gem of the old rock."

CHAPTER FIVE.

1. "So could I wish verses to be composed on my bones."

2. "The souls of those are most pure who leave their bodies by force."

3. "The famous nations of the dead."

4. One of the Fates.

5. "I would fain have it known that I am: I do not wish that it may be known what I am."

6. "Actuality."

7. The goddess of childbirth.

8. "All is vanity and feeding the wind." *νομὴ ανέμου*, etc., "feeding and pasturing of the wind."

9. "Nor of their goods was found more than would suffice to buy a pyre and pitch, whereby their bodies might be burned, to hire a mourner and to buy an urn."

10. "It matters not whether corruption or the funeral pile dissolve the body."

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